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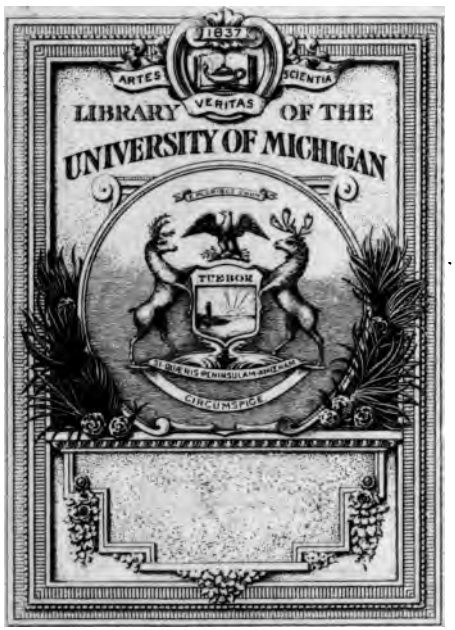
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John Addington Symonds

LAST AND FIRST

BEING TWO ESSAYS:
THE NEW SPIRIT *and*
ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH

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INTRODUCTION

The two essays in this volume represent, respectively, the first and the last most important contributions to literary criticism by John Addington Symonds. They are now published for the first time.

The essay on Arthur Hugh Clough appeared in the Fortnightly Review for December, 1868, four years before Symonds's first book, THE STUDY OF DANTE, *was published. Symonds relates in his autobiography that he first heard of Clough from Professor Jowett. The famous scholar was so shocked by the news of Clough's death that he could not hear Symonds's essay that evening. Jowett added —"He (Clough) was the only man of genius, whom I knew to be a man of genius, that I*

have seen among the younger set at Balliol." This was in 1861.

Symonds was attracted to Clough by the poet's scepticism and sympathized with his views. The essay reveals the liberal side of Symonds's mind more clearly than many of his later works do. In 1869 Symonds helped the poet's widow to edit and arrange the prose remains of her husband, and she made a most grateful acknowledgment to Symonds in the Introduction for his part. Symonds never reprinted his essay on the poet, who is as famous for being the subject of Matthew Arnold's great elegy Thyrsis, as for his own great poems. For intellectual vigor, and purity of style, and as a penetrating critical study, the essay ranks high.

The address on The New Spirit was published in the Fortnightly Review for March, 1893, a month before Symonds died. It represents his final impression of the Renaissance. He shows the similarity of the modern spirit in art and science to the spirit that prevailed in the 16th century. The last of his seven volumes

on the Renaissance had appeared in 1886. The great Humanist Movement was the theme of his prize essay at Oxford. And now towards the close of his life, he summed up his more mature views on a subject which had occupied him so many years. The essay now appears in its entirety.

Symonds was, with Pater and Arnold, one of the great Victorian creative critics. He was probably superior intellectually to Matthew Arnold, more reliable in his literary judgments and as a stylist he was more charming. He suffered from a spirit of self-depreciation; it was only too prevalent throughout his autobiography, and people took him at his own estimation. Even so fine a critic as Arthur Symons has left an unworthy and unjust estimate of him.

Symonds will live in English literature. His studies of the Greek Poets, of the Renaissance, his monographs on Dante, Boccaccio, Whitman, his critical essays and travels, are among the finest things in our language. His poems also, which are so little known, are of

great merit. And his autobiography and letters, edited by Mr. Horatio F. Brown, form one of the most poignant and artistic documents in any literature.

—ALBERT MORDELL.

PHILADELPHIA.

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THE NEW SPIRIT.

(AN ANALYSIS OF THE EMANCIPATION OF THE INTELLECT IN THE FOURTEENTH, FIFTEENTH AND SIXTEENTH CENTURIES)

THE NEW SPIRIT.

It was my honourable duty to read an English essay on "The Renaissance," in the theatre at Oxford, on the 17th of June, 1868. At that time confused and erroneous views were common as to the meaning of the term Renaissance, and as to the importance of the historical period which it denotes. Even so able a thinker as G. W. F. Hegel, in his *Philosophy of History,* passed from the Middle Ages to the German Reformation with three pages of transition, in which he superficially alluded to the revival of learning, the efflorescence of the fine arts, and the discovery of America. Hegel, apparently, had not grasped the revolutionary character of humanism; its reaction against mediæval methods of thinking; its

preparation of modern scientific criticism. But what revealed a deeper want of insight into the subject, was his failure to perceive that the Reformation owed its force as an intellectual movement—apart from mere revolt against ecclesiastical corruption—to the New Spirit of independence which had been liberated in Italy by the Renaissance.

During the last thirty years rapid advance has been made toward a true knowledge of the Renaissance. A group of eminent writers in France, Germany, England, and Italy, have devoted their best energies to investigating its origins in the Middle Ages, explaining the conditions of its development, and analysing its specific character. Yet I feel that we are still very far from being able to give a plausible theory of the causes which produced this reawakening of the human mind, or to define with absolute precision what was its vital essence.

What I wrote in my early youth returns to my memory now; and I do not seem able, after thirty years of searching, to yield a bet-

ter account of the ætiology of the Renaissance than I did then. Then I introduced my treatment of the subject with remarks upon the abysmal deeps of national personality, and the inscrutability of laws which govern human development, adding: [1] "These remarks, if generally true, may be applied with special significance to the age of the Renaissance—that mighty period of dissolution and reconstruction, of the reabsorption of old material, and of the development of new principles, of discoveries and inventions mutually strengthening one another, and tending to diffuse and render permanent the power of man. If we ask, what was the Renaissance? the lovers of art will answer that it was the change produced on painting, architecture, and sculpture, by the study of newly recovered antiques; nor will they agree about the value of this change; for some deplore it as the decadence of true inspiration, others hail it as the dawning of a brief but glorious day. The scholar means by

(1) *The Renaissance.* Oxford, Henry Hammans, 1863, p. 8.

the Renaissance that discovery of ancient manuscripts and that progress in philology which led to a correct knowledge of classical literature, to new systems of philosophy, to a fresh taste in poetry, to a deeper insight into language, and, finally, to the great Lutheran schism and the emancipation of modern thought. The jurist understands by the term a dissolution of old systems of law based upon the False Decretals, the acquisition of a true text of the Corpus Juris, and generally the opening of a new era for jurisprudence. Ask the historian of political Europe what marked the age of the Renaissance, and he will talk of the abolition of feudalism, of French interference in Italian affairs, of the tendency to centralisation, of the growth of great monarchies, and of diplomacy, which was the instrument by which kings established their supremacy, and wrought out their schemes of self-aggrandisement. Besides, we hear of the discovery of America, and of the exploration of the East; the true system of the world is explained by Copernicus; Vesalius teaches us

how man is made; printing, engraving, paper, the compass, gun-powder, all start suddenly into being to aid the dissolution of what is rotten and must perish, to strengthen and perpetuate the new and useful and life-giving. Yet, if we rightly consider the question, we shall find that neither one of these answers, nor yet indeed all of them together, can adequately explain the multiplicity and apparent incongruity of those phenomena which made the interval between 1450 and 1550 the most marvellous period that the world has ever known. In the word Renaissance, or palingenesis, in the idea of Europe arousing herself from the torpor of trance and incubation which weighed upon her for ten centuries, we detect a spiritual regeneration, a natural crisis, not to be explained by this or that phenomenon of its development, but to be accepted as a gigantic movement for which at length the time was come, which had been anticipated by the throes of centuries, which was aided and extended by external incidents, and which still continues to live and move and expand within

us, by virtue of its own power, and of the marvellous mechanical inventions that preserve to us inviolably each onward step in its progress towards maturity."

It may be impossible to analyse the causes which produced this re-awakening of intellectual energy. But it is not beyond the scope of criticism to sketch out its essential character, and to describe the main conditions under which it was effected. In the first place, we must bear steadily in mind the fact that the Renaissance was, above all things, a spiritual process, a reacquisition of mental lucidity and moral independence after centuries of purblind somnambulism. For this reason, I have elected to define the genius of Renaissance as *the New Spirit;* and I propose to consider, as broadly and generally as possible, what were the leading characteristics of this New Spirit.

Antecedent circumstances, affecting the whole of Europe in varying degrees, rendered the emergence of spiritual liberty possible. These were the absorption of the Teutonic barbarians into a common political system, at the

head of which stood the Holy Roman Church and the Holy Roman Empire; the assimilation of one religious creed by all parts and parcels of the European community; the definition of those integers as separate nationalities, with languages of their own, and similar monarchical institutions; the possession by them all of one learned language in the Latin tongue; finally, the gradual relaxation of the mediæval dualism of Church and Empire, and the high degree of autonomy and social comfort attained by the Italians. The reason why Italy took the lead in the Renaissance may be found not only in her favourable geographical and economical conditions, but also in her unbroken connection with the antique past, her intolerance of feudalism, and her essentially mundane temperament. The power of the Empire had been sapped by its localization in Germany, by the rivalries of monarchies and republics claiming independence, and by the fierce war waged against the House of Hohenstauffen through successive papacies. The authority of the Church had been weakened by

her Avignonian exile, by the councils of Constance and Basle, by Wycliffe and the Lollards in England, by the Hussites in Bohemia, by the heretics of Provence, the Paterines of Italy.

The Occidental nations, in the last years of the Middle Ages, had thus attained a point at which, without being conscious of a coming change, they were ready to enter upon a new epoch of civilization. We might compare them to a liquid mass of molten metal at the moment when it is about to settle down and solidify. When that happens, it is not the whole mass which suddenly becomes stationary, but the curdling process begins in what may be called the most propitious quarter. Here a crust or a cake forms, and this acts like a nucleus for the surrounding fluid substance. Something of the same sort occurs in all processes of crystallization or gelation. These analogies are clearly defective; for what took place at the beginning of the Renaissance ought properly to be compared to organic rather than to solidifying change. We could perhaps discover a better

metaphor in embryology, appealing to that speck in the ovum out of which the complex vital structure has to be evolved. However, let that pass. In the phenomenon with which we are now occupied, the propitious quarter, the nucleus of the ovum, was Italy. The reasons for this priority of the Italians have been already assigned. They never broke with the Roman past. They absorbed the Ostrogoths and Lombards. They resisted feudalism. They kept their language close to Latin. Their cities bore antique names, and abounded in monuments of the classical past. They created the Roman Church, and at the same time they were the least imposed on by its spiritual pretensions. Farther than all the sister-nations, they had advanced upon the path of material and social prosperity. They held the trade of the world in their grasp. They lived in diplomatical and commercial relations with the East, which was only known to Englishmen and Franks and Germans as the land of hated unbelievers. They owned no allegiance to kings, and were loosely bound together

in a mesh of independent, mutually repellent and attractive city-states. It devolved upon them therefore to revive the positive and plastic genius of the antique world, and by combining this with what remained alive of mediævalism, to give form and substance to that hybrid which I have called the New Spirit.

These considerations help us to understand the importance of the Emperor Frederick II. in the history of the Renaissance; the hatred with which he inspired orthodox Christians; his precocious prefigurement of the coming epoch. I must repeat that the Renaissance was essentially intellectual—an outburst of mental and moral independence. The first and leading note of it is the reassertion of the individual in his rights to think and feel, to shape his conduct according to the dictates of his reason. *The resurgence of personality in the realm of thought* lies at the root of the whole matter. In the sphere of action, personality played freely enough throughout the Middle Ages. But men were agreed then to accept a certain system of thought, elaborated mainly by Church-

men. Dominant conceptions prevailed. We have the spectacle of whole nations in movement towards the Holy Land, governed by a romantic idea. We have the no less instructive spectacle of Henry of England doing penance at the shrine of Becket, of Henry of Germany kneeling in the snow at Canossa. But now comes Frederick II., the most mundane and humane of rulers, so far as we can judge him through the mists of prejudice and calumny; also the most sceptical, most positive, perhaps most cynical of thinkers. He undertakes a Crusade, and brings it to a not inglorious conclusion by a treaty with the Sultan. He stocks his castles of Apulia with Saracen troops, and colonizes waste lands with infidels. His court is the rallying-point for free-thinkers, artists, men of letters, selected without regard for creed or nationality. He is an incarnation of the first effective force of the Renaissance—personality in the sphere of thought, self-conscious of its aims, self-governed in its conduct.

During this shifting of the scenes from mediæval to modern modes of thinking, in this

gestation of the New Spirit and creation of the hybrid which shall fuse past and future to form our present, it is impossible to distinguish objects very clearly. The protagonists of the movement often seem to contradict themselves. Frederick II. issues edicts against the Cathari and Paterini, probably because he regarded them as social anarchists, possibly because he strove in his diplomacy to humor the Church. Out of the midst of positive and practical Italy arise the last great flaming stars of Christian faith, St. Francis and St. Dominic. The Church is still so vital that she comprehends the utility of incorporating the Umbrian visionary and the Spanish tyrant over souls into her system. Still, whether we regard Frederick II., or Francis and Dominic, the fact of sharply defined individuality emerges into prominence.

Dante, whose master-work, the *Divine Comedy,* is rightly held to be the everlasting monument of mediævalism on the eve of dissolution, illustrates the same fact. He remained within the sphere of mediæval ideas in his religious creed, his philosophy, his political ideals.

But he displayed his personal independence, the freedom of his intellect, not merely in the critical judgments he passed upon the lowest and the most exalted of his predecessors and contemporaries, not merely in the vivid picture he left of Italy seething in internecine civic struggles, but also, and far more effectively, in the quality of his great epic. Whatever else the *Divine Comedy* may be, it is the record of the man who made it, the intense and fiery self-delineation of a haughty spirit. Previous literature of the mediæval epoch had given birth to nothing of the sort. At one bound art leapt from the region of dim generalities or genial arras-work, into that of incisive definitions and glyptic purity of outline. The New Spirit, in its first phase of personality, self-conscious and self-assertive, shone forth through Dante's poem, albeit the atmosphere he breathed, the material he handled, were still mediæval.

The second phase in this genesis of the New Spirit may be described as *Curiosity*. Personality had shaken itself to some extent free. In

what are called the heresies of the mediæval epoch, it showed a will to investigate principles, to interrogate Church doctrine, to reconstitute the scheme of society upon some fresh basis. Personality began to vindicate the rights of the natural man, queried the condemnation of the flesh and senses, lusted after the world in thought as well as deed. In men like Wycliffe and Huss it disputed the sole right of clerical tradition to settle interpretations of Scripture. In Joachim of Flora it anticipated a revelation superior to that of Christ and his Apostles. In the Goliardi and the lyrists of Provence, it gave the agreeable form of literary art to appetites and sentiments. In the school of the Averrhoists it undermined those postulates and axioms upon which the huge edifice of scholasticism, triumphant in Thomas of Aquino, had been raised. In the court of Frederick II. it exhibited a temper akin to that of Gallio. Prepared by these processes of incipient scepticism, which were still carried on within the ringfence of mediæval habits of thought, semi-emancipated personality now turned with eager

inquisitive eyes to the vast neglected store of human experience funded in antique literature. Here stretched a whole untraveled empire of the intellect. The men of the Middle Ages, though it lay open to them, had wilfully refused to explore that realm; or, when they crossed its borders, they arrived with prejudices and preoccupations which obscured their mental vision. The pioneers of the New Spirit, exhilarated by the novelty of their experience, surveyed fertile and abundant regions, beyond the jurisdiction, untainted by the trail, of ecclesiastical authority. Into this paradise of mind and imagination they leapt like boys, for the pure pleasure of the excursion, without any settled intention of rebelling against Mother Church. Their keenly awakened personality made them desire to know what man had been under diverse intellectual and moral conditions, when no thoughts oppressed him of damnation and eternity. Seeking thus, they arrived at a superior self-knowledge, and became aware of their own liberty. To their ineffable satisfac-

tion they entered into the possession of a nobler and serener earth.

"Largior hic campos æther et lumine vestit
Purpureo, solemque suum, sua sidera nôrunt."

That Elysium of the classic past was crowded with gods and heroes, with orators and poets and historians. Its monuments of art and literature were supereminent in beauty and in passion; throbbing with lyric life, pulsing with music, resonant with song, resplendent with imagined light and colour. Its records unrolled majestic pageants of rising and falling empires, of glorious actions and heroic lives. In this congenial atmosphere their own resuscitated senses seemed to thrive. Their frost-bound perceptions thawed, their cramped limbs began to move with new delight in living. The natural man, no longer cowed by the conviction of his sinfulness, stood up and faced the heavens. The carnal appetites were dignified by contact with ideal loveliness and tragic destiny.

This, I imagine, was the attitude of mind which resulted in *Humanism*. We are wont to talk about the "Revival of Learning." But

let us not forget the sense of inebriation, the revel and the riot, which attended that irruption of mediæval scholars into the Elysium of the past. Let us realise the intense joy with which they discovered that this Elysium was no dream, but concrete fact, was in sober earnest the truth of what men had been, might again be, ought to be, were made to be. In their first exultation, they dubbed their acquisitions by the significant title of *"Humaniora,"* or the things which properly belong to man, as distinguished from things with which the Church and scholasticism defrauded and perplexed his reason.

Petrarch is the hero of this stage. He combined a personality no less defined and even more self-conscious than Dante's, with the curiosity of the New Spirit. His book of poems upon Laura is the subtle analysis of a highly sensitive soul. His affection for the author of the *Confessions* proves him to have been already possessed with the ache and yearning of the modern temperament—"la maladie de la pensée—l'amour de l'impossible

—l'autopsie psychologique de l'âme." This was one aspect of Petrarch's genius. The other was a manful belief in scholarship, a perception that classic literature would furnish the means of spiritual rehabilitation. He was the first to understand that the dignity of man as a rational being must be re-established, not by combating theology, but by leaving it alone, and by assimilating the wisdom of the ancients. Petrarch approached the classics with the tact and sensibility which had been lacking to mediæval students. Virgil, and Ovid, and Cicero were for him no magicians, no heretics, and no mystagogues, but men of like nature with himself, superior indeed in culture, yet such as he could comprehend, make friends with, learn from. Petrarch bridged the chasm of the Middle Ages, even as Milton's Satan, when he made that traversable roadway across chaos. After him scholars freely passed into Elysium and returned into the world of common day. History was seen to be continuous, and the unity of the human race was demonstrated.

Humanism, when once started by Petrarch,

rapidly pursued its course of accumulation and assimilation. The tale of the Revival in its several stages—collection of manuscripts, interpretation of texts, study of style, resuscitation of Greek learning, printing, translation, and so forth—has been so often told that there is no need to retrace it. I must pause, however, to contemplate the mental and moral attitude of the humanists more closely.

"We go," said Cyriac of Ancona, "to awake the dead." It was in that frame of mind that Petrarch's immediate successors entered the classical Elysium by the bridge which he had built. But the dead whom they found there were at once seen to be the really living. These scholars then came back with the firm conviction that contemporary people of importance —hair-splitting dialecticians, superstitious quacks, relic-mongers, jugglers with holy vessels, salesmen of absolutions—were the dead or dying. Defunct and obsolete for them were Fathers of the Church, doctors seraphic and angelic, doctors of laws, saints of silly miracles, childish worshippers at shrines, sleek, cunning

Levites in the tabernacle. Alive and luminous with ever-during glory rose the poets and philosophers, the orators and statesmen, the artists and law-givers, of the ancient world. These worthies and heroes had either lived before Christ or had ignored the shining of his light. Therefore Dante, although he described them as—

> "Genti con occhi tardi e gravi
> Di grande autorità ne' lor sembianti"—

placed them, without the smallest sense of the injustice and absurdity of their damnation, upon the first circle of Hell, within earshot of the wailings and the shriekings which eternally rise from its torture-chambers. The humanists having adopted these same noble personages as their sole guides in the lore of living, as the only teachers of true wisdom, could not maintain the orthodox attitude of reprobation. Yet scholarship was too engrossed with its own labour of discovery to open a crusade against Church practices or dogmas. Why waste valuable time in squabbles with ignorant authority when that wonderful region, the dreamland of

a reality more real, a truth more true than daily life, awaited exploration? In this way paganism filtered tacitly but surely, like an elixir of fresh mountain air, or like a miasma from foul marshes—according to the point of view one takes of the matter—into the intellectual constitution of humanism. The significance of this will appear at a later point of our inquiry. At present it is enough to remark that the curiosity of the New Spirit early generated *Rationalism.*

We cannot connect the rapid growth of the fine arts in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries immediately with the Revival of Learning. But we can show that the arts, like learning, derived energy from the curiosity of self-conscious personalities, aroused to vivid interest in the world around them. As Petrarch revealed a new insight into literature, so Giotto and Nicolo Pisano displayed a sense of natural beauty, a feeling for form and composition, a power over dramatic action and emotional expression, which had been unknown in the Middle Ages. The painters and the sculptors of

the early Renaissance looked on the world around them with eyes from which the scales of centuries had fallen. They soon began to particularize, each individual forming his manner, selecting what pleased or touched him most in nature, aiming solely at the best and truest interpretation. This led to profound study of details, careful anatomy and drawing of the human nude, elaborate experiments in perspective, subtle attempts to render atmosphere, exquisite sympathy with plant-structure, birds, beasts, flowers, and shells. At first the artists served the Church. Giotto and his school covered the cathedrals of Italy with Bible histories, legends of the saints, allegories relating to ecclesiastical dogma. But when the Revival of Learning filled men's minds with classical mythology and story, the artists turned their attention with fresh delight and with no less scrupulous sympathy to the Greek Pantheon and the deeds of Roman worthies. Art was indifferent to the spiritual nature of the subject, impartial in the bestowal of her skill and pains. After this fashion sculpture

and painting assisted Humanism, by exhibiting through plastic form and colour the unity of the spirit of man under both Christian and pagan aspects. St. Sebastian might have been a Christian martyr, and Antinous the deified mignon of a pagan emperor; but art only saw their common qualities of beauty, convenient opportunities for depicting naked young men in the prime of life. A dead Christ and a living Hercules had equal merit if the torso was well modelled. Female charm shone forth in St. Lucy and the Magdalene as agreeably as in Aphrodite and the Graces. Moreover, in addition to this reduction of both pagan and Christian subject-matter to a common æsthetical denominator, the fine arts contributed what may be called *Naturalism* to the characteristics of the New Spirit. Naturalism was the product of artistic curiosity, as Rationalism had been the product of the humanistic curiosity.

This is a point of some importance. Sculptors and painters worked in complete independence. So long as they did not outrage

religious feeling and moral decency too brutally, they were free to follow their own predilections. Like Signorelli, they might cover the arabesques of Heaven and Hell with male and female nudities displayed in grotesque and fantastic postures. Like Filarete, they might mould the Rape of Ganymede upon the bronze gates of St. Peter's. Their duty was to succeed in beautiful presentation and expression. In order to arrive at this result they laboured with enthusiasm at the technique of their crafts, they studied natural objects minutely, and made themselves familiar with every form of fact. Naturalism, as liberated by artistic practice, proved later on of great service to the physical sciences. It stimulated habits of close observation, bred a craving after exact knowledge, freed the mind from prejudices regarding the uncleanliness or repulsiveness of anything which could be found in nature. Some of the earliest mathematicians, anatomists, physiologists, in Italy were artists. In Leo Battista Alberti, in Leonardo da Vinci, in Michelangelo Buonarotti, we have men who

combined the subtlest sensibility to carnal beauty, the most thorough command of form and colour, with profound practical science and with those prophetical indagations which contain the germs of luminous discovery. Naturalism, again, is the direct opposite of mysticism. Insofar as mediæval Christianity was mystical, the figurative and naturalistic representation of its dogmas inflicted serious injury upon the fabric of the creed. The Creator did not gain in dignity by being represented as an old man with a hoary beard. The Trinity was reduced to the same level as the Pope, when it appeared as a robed pontiff with a triple crown; it became ridiculous under the aspect of an old man, a white dove, and a crucifix. Moreover, people soon perceived that Pagan mythology was not only more enticing and attractive, but also more adapted to plastic presentation, than the mythology of the Christian faith. Gods and heroes, nymphs and Graces, suited the sensuousness of arts which aimed at corporeal loveliness, far better than emaciated saints, disgusting martyrdoms,

crucifixions, and infernal torments. Silent and unperceived, art, by its naturalism, sapped orthodoxy much in the same way as scholarship, by its rationalism, was serving the same purpose.

Naturalism did not confine its influence to the arts of form and colour. It very early invaded literature, especially fiction, poetry, and narrative. Boccaccio, like his master, Petrarch, was both a humanist and a poet of marked individuality. In his former capacity he gave a start to the study of Greek, and did yeoman's service by making miscellaneous compilations and collections from the classics. In poetry he ranks as the first and one of the greatest of modern naturalists. This is evident, not only in the *Decameron,* but also in the versified romances which he composed so fluently. Boccaccio bequeathed to Italy a peculiar type of literature, in close relation to the plastic arts, which, after passing through the hands of Sannazaro, Pulci, Dé Medici, Poliziano, Boiardo, Bandello, reached its climax in Ariosto. The enormous influence exercised by



this great writer over posterity was not due to the commanding grandeur of his genius, but to the fact that naturalism formed an essential ingredient of the New Spirit. Boccaccio, as novelist, remained unrivalled; but, as poet, he fell below the level of Poliziano and Boiardo. It was his merit to have imported crude, unabashed, and jocund naturalism into the sphere of monumental literature.

The New Spirit advanced under retarding influences of Catholicity and mediæval dulness. These drawbacks, however, were not so formidable as might appear. Neither scholarship nor art assumed a position of direct antagonism to Christianity; and though they were creating an intellectual atmosphere in which orthodoxy could not hope to survive and thrive, their first aspect seemed both innocent and agreeable. The Church had become secular and mundane, indifferent to her real essence and vocation, merged in diplomacies and compromises. Unaware of any special danger, her most enlightened sons, men dedicated to study by the fact of their profession, felt the

gust of the new intellectual life abroad in Europe. Her chiefs, the popes and cardinals, regarded scholarship as an adornment of their social culture, and art as a convenient handmaid of their faith. The one was welcomed in the palace and the council chamber, the other in the cathedral and the oratory. Humanism, in particular, proved at the outset a substantial ally against astrologers, Averrhoists, wrangling scholastics, sordid monks, and all the fanatical free-lances who are obnoxious to privileged establishments. The fabric of the Church appeared so solid, humanism so enlightened, art so pious, that Catholicity felt justified in swimming with the tide. She thought, and not unreasonably thought, that she might acclimatise the New Spirit and secure it for her service, as she had annexed the fervent charity of Francis, the persecuting zeal of Dominic. Owing to the easy-going temper of the Roman Curia, and to the indifference of scholarship for theological disputes, the New Spirit obtained a century of quiet working at the very centre of European life.

When the Great Schism came to an end, and the Popes returned to reign in Rome, the triumph of humanism was secured. The first pontiff of this new régime, Nicholas V., was a distinguished scholar, derived in a direct line from Petrarch. The next pontiff of importance, Pius II., was a versatile diplomatist and man of letters, somewhat akin to Leo Battista Alberti in temperament, sensitive at all points to the charms of nature and of art, enamoured with the delicacies and ingenuities of humanistic rhetoric. These men gave tone to the Papacy, when Rome once more became a capital, and when the Holy See entered into political relations on a common footing with the despots and republics of Italy.

The whole peninsula at this period (1447-1464) had been saturated with humanism. Scholars educated in the lecture-rooms of Filelfo and Guarino held office as chancellors, secretaries, envoys, orators on state occasions, protonotaries, court-chamberlains. The new learning was the passport for young men of ability into all places of secular and ecclesi-

astical importance. No one regarded their morality, their orthodoxy, their private opinions or their personal conduct. It was sufficient if they commanded the main things needful at the moment: the tongue of the fluent rhetorician, the pen of the ready writer, the memory of the student stocked with antique erudition. We marvel at the rapidity with which this modern type of culture supplanted mediævalism. But the rapidity which moves our wonder is the proof of healthy and organic growth. One eminent family at Florence contributed in no small measure to the triumph of the New Spirit. The Medici, through four generations, beginning with Cosimo Pater Patriæ, passing through Lorenzo the Magnificent and Leo X., culminating in Clement VII., sustained the cause of humanism and of art. Nor did they stand alone. The lords of Milan and Rimini, the kings of Naples, the dukes of Ferrara and Urbino, all the minor potentates in every city-state, vied with one another in conforming to this novel type of civility. Italians of all regions and all political diversities found them-

selves confederated by common sympathy with the New Spirit.

Meanwhile, Christianity continued to be the official religion of the nation. But the temper of the new civility was pagan. Sensuous in art, sceptical in study, it rejected asceticism and derided dogma. "Let us enjoy the Papacy now that we have got it," said one Pope. "If we believe nothing ourselves, there is no reason why we should interfere with believers," said another. "How much hath that lie of Christ profited the world," is a third of these Papal utterances. And those who acted more than they spoke—Popes like Sixtus IV. and Alexander VI.—presented a glaring spectacle of Antichrist enthroned upon St. Peter's chair. If such were the shepherds, judge what were the flocks!

The paganism of the Italian Renaissance, of which so much has been said, and justly, was a very real thing. Humanism and art, by returning to Greek and Roman ideals of thought and conduct, and by emphasising the sensuous elements of life, created a fine æsthetic

atmosphere, in which the emancipated personality of the modern men moved freely, feeling at liberty to sport with natural inclinations. Vices and passions had been frequent enough, and forcible enough, in the mediæval period; but then they were recognized as sins and contradictions of the dominant ideal. Now they assumed forms of elegance and beauty, claiming condonation on the score of polite culture. The scepticism inherent in men who criticised Christianity from the standpoint of antique manners, terminated in a not repulsive cynicism. Society strove to be epicurean, but did not quite succeed, for the barbarian and the ascetic had not been eradicated.

The paganism of the Renaissance might be described as moral and religious indifference, an attitude of not ungenial toleration towards believers and unbelievers, saints and sinners. In like manner the rationalism of the Renaissance was intellectual indifference, interest in thoughts without regard for the sources whence they came or the particular shade of opinion they denoted. The naturalism of the Renais-

sance was sensuous indifference, an attitude of sympathetic observation toward everything in nature, without false shame or loathing, an openness of sensibility to all impressions. These three factors were needed for the formation of the modern analytical spirit, which is impartial in judgment, unprejudiced for or against religious and ethical codes, reckless as to the results of its method, indifferent as to the moral or æsthetical qualities of the thing to be examined. To this point, then, had the union of personality with curiosity or mental appetite brought the Italians in the golden age, as it is absurdly called, of Leo X.

The Revival of Learning was accomplished. That is to say, the Greek and Latin authors which we now possess, had, with a very few exceptions, been printed, commented and translated. During the course of this process, a new organ was added to the modern mind, which had been completely lacking in the Middle Ages. The elucidation of ancient authors, the settlement of texts, and the comparison of manuscripts, produced *Criticism*. Generated

in the pagan milieu of the earlier Renaissance, criticism naturally attacked the superstitions and the vices of the clergy. But in Italy this was done with good humour by humanists like Poggio and novelists like Bandello. They did not mean mischief, and aimed at no revolution in the Church. The situation became more delicate when Christian dogma, ecclesiastical tradition, the principles of private and public ethics, the Biblical cosmology, the philosophy of Aquinas, were subjected in turn to destructive analysis. It was at the Court of Naples, during the warfare carried on between the House of Aragon and the Holy See, that humanism first showed its teeth in earnest. Lorenzo Valla attacked the temporalities of Rome by his treatise on "The erroneously believed and falsely fabricated Donation of Constantine." The same critic declared the epistle of Christ to Abgarus a forgery, sneered at the bad Latin of the Vulgate, and denied the authenticity of the Apostles' creed. Machiavelli, working in another region, openly proclaimed that the monastic virtues of humility

and obedience sapped virility and character. He proved the Papacy to have been the source of moral and political weakness to Italy. He studied history from a coldly analytical and positive point of view, treating mankind as a political community, governed by ability and might, without reference to a provident Deity. Copernicus, in the field of astronomy, dethroned Ptolemy, and made the sun the centre of our system. Pomponazzo called the immortality of the soul in question. Telesio pronounced that interrogation of Nature is the only basis for a sound philosophy. On all sides, therefore, criticism initiated a revolt against authority. That independent and self-conscious personality, which formed the vital principle of the Renaissance movement, had arrived at asserting the right of private judgment. Fortified by curiosity, rationalism, naturalism, the critical reason now rejected everything which could not be proved by positive methods of analysis. In other words, *Modern Science* had been born.

Down to the end of Leo X.'s reign, this

advance of criticism caused little uneasiness. Society, including the Church, was imbued with humanistic scepticism and æsthetic sensuousness. The gay and glittering life of the Renaissance dazzled the eyes of all men. What if professors in dark corners blurted out uncomfortable truths? The weighty bearings of their utterances were not perceived. Scandals raised by Valla's heresy and Pomponazzo's materialism disappeared before the dubious assertion that, while they speculated as philosophers, they believed as Christians. This convenient sophistry cloaked a multitude of sins. The Copernican hypothesis was laughed at as an incredible theory started by a visionary barbarian from the shores of the Baltic. Telesio passed for a harmless natural philosopher, a kind of botanist or conchologist. No one noticed the significance of the discovery of America, the exploration of the globe, the proof of the Antipodes. It sufficed in Lateran Councils to confirm the views of the mediæval Church upon disputed topics. This was the sop which a sceptical Pope threw to ecclesias-

tics alarmed by the steady spread of neological opinions.

It is well to pause here for a moment and review the position which the New Spirit had secured in Italy. In literature, art and speculation, it enjoyed an almost untrammelled intellectual liberty. But the temper of the race did not favour searching theological discussions, and the time was not quite ripe for an outburst of revolutionary metaphysic. The humanists were too indifferent and easy-going —lapped in their Elysium of antiquity. They aimed at culture more than the discovery of truth. Their paganism wore a self-indulgent and immoral aspect. They sneered at Christianity. In their cynicism they did not care for religion, and were well contented to leave a Church alone, which so conveniently fostered their tastes and condoned their vices. Moreover, we must not forget that we are tracing the history of a hybrid. The blending of present with past, of pagan with Christian, of ancient with modern, produced an inevitable confusion in men's minds. Thought could not

run quite clear from the sediment of decaying mysticism, dogmatism, authority. It hardly knew the nature of its own audacity until the apparition of Giordano Bruno. Art was hampered and indecisive between Olympus and Calvary, literature clogged by mediæval reminiscences and scholastic pedantry. The New Spirit, although so vigorous, still remained a perplexed and seeking force—perplexed by opposing currents of influence, cumbered by erudition, seeking adjustments, groping after exits. The like is true of society and individuals. We have only to study the biographies of typical personages, a Michelangelo, a Cellini, a Roderigo Borgia, in order to perceive that the same contradictions existed in life as in the genius of the age. What makes the Renaissance so fascinating and so difficult to handle is the fact of its hybridism.

But now the tide began to take a serious turn. Humanism had been transplanted beyond the Alps. Criticism armed the scholars of Germany with artillery far more efficient than those light guns of the Italian sceptics.

The Germans believed in Christianity, and clung to their religion. Horrified by the paganism of the South, indignant at the cynical hypocrisy of infidel Popes and prelates, irritated beyond measure by the sale of indulgences for the building of a pompous temple, the people stirred in revolt against Rome. Their leading humanists applied the method of critical analysis to the Bible, not with the intention of sneering Christianity away, but of discovering what was the true essence of creed which had been overgrown—like Glaucus in the myth of Plato—by weeds and barnacles at the bottom of that dead sea of ecclesiastical corruption. The Reformation attacked the authority of popes and councils; disputed the traditional dogmas of orthodoxy; proclaimed the fullest liberty of private judgment; denounced monasticism and the celibacy of the clergy as immoral and unscriptural; and, what was worse, menaced the very fabric of the Catholic Church, its temporalities, its hierarchy, its supremacy over souls.

The Reformation must be regarded as the

product of that intellectual emancipation which started with the curiosity of Petrarch and performed the stages I have already described in Italy. Only this new force now animated a race which had no natural bias for the fine arts and letters, which disliked pagan licence, and was not ready to abandon Christian doctrine. Sceptical and revolutionary at its outset, the German Reformation speedily revealed the inherent conservatism of its promoters. Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, differ as they might in minor details, agreed in preserving the main features of the Christian faith intact. For the authority of the Church they substituted the authority of the Bible. Less logical than the Italians, they were not conscious of the weakness of their own position. They did not surmise that their critical method must lead inevitably to Voltaire, Renan, and the science of comparative theology. Luther would have been indignant had he been told that he was playing the part of pioneer to coming Comtes and Huxleys. Yet this was the fact, and the Church in Italy perceived it. Luterano became equivalent to infidel.

The Church girded herself up for a conflict to the death in defence of her religious creeds, her system of discipline, her political interests, her temporal power. The clash of Catholicism and Reformation destroyed the tranquil medium in which the New Spirit had been thriving and advancing toward maturity. Positive, scientific, analytical, the Genius of intellectual independence and open-mindedness met with rancorous hostility in both camps. The Reformers of Wittenberg and Zürich and Geneva were at bottom no less opposed to free thought than were the Catholic reactionaries of Spain. Calvin burned Servetus fifty years before the Roman Inquisition burned Bruno. So far as Italy was concerned, the Tridentine Council extinguished, or, to put the case more exactly, drove underground the New Spirit. In Germany the Thirty Years' War annihilated civilisation.

It would be sentimental to deplore the waste of time, of energy, of human life, which this conflict between Reform and Catholic reaction involved for Europe. Considering the

different moral and intellectual temperaments of North and South, the different stages of culture attained by Germany and Italy, the struggle was inevitable. Nor did the New Spirit lose in the end by the retardation of its development. Had it retained the complexion it assumed in Italy during the Renaissance, we should have been ethically poorer and volitionally weaker. Imagine a seventeenth-century Prussia ruled in tastes and opinions by humanists like Filelfo and poets like the author of *Hermaphroditus!* Paganism, barely tolerable in Naples, must have been repulsive when communicated to the coarse and eminently inartistic Borussian temperament. Time, moreover, was needed to leaven the heterogeneous masses of the Occidental nations with a common culture. This has been done by scholarship, and the steady, if slow, advance of scientific thought. The destinies of science were, from the first, secure. And are we not aware that *Virtus sub pondere crescit?*

At the commencement of the Catholic reaction some of the calmest and wisest spirits,

who had imbibed the new philosophy of thought, but who were incapable of siding with the Reformers—who had, in fact, gauged the inherent finality and vulgarity of Protestant Dissent in any shape—became what I have elsewhere called religious Whigs. The attitude of men like Contarini, More, Erasmus, Sarpi, has great interest for the psychologist; and a fascinating book remains to be written upon this group of thinkers. They dreamed that the New Spirit might purge itself of Paganism, that Catholicism might cast off its superstitions and corruptions, that Reform might prove accommodating upon such comparative trifles as the nature of the eucharist and salvation by faith. They imagined an ideal Europe, in which religion and science should coexist, where men should be rational in thought and pious in conduct. But the very conditions of the case rendered this solution of the difficulty impossible.

That the New Spirit would prove ultimately intransigeant, and irreconcilable to Christian theology, was clearly demonstrated by its last

and noblest representative in Italy. Bruno's life was cut short at the comparatively early age of forty-four, yet he left behind him voluminous writings, from which an adequate idea may be formed of his philosophy. As a personality, endowed with singular courage and remarkable independence, Bruno towers eminent among the powerful characters of that age so rich in individualities. The two currents of Renaissance curiosity, which had produced criticism and naturalism, met and blended in his intellect. As a thinker, his chief merit was to have perceived the true bearings of the Copernican discovery. He saw that the substitution of a heliocentric for the former geocentric theory of our system destroyed at one blow large portions of the Christian mythology. But more than this. Copernicus had failed to draw the logical conclusions of his own hypothesis. For him, as for the elder physicists, there remained a sphere of fixed stars enclosing the world perceived by our senses within walls of crystal. Bruno asserted the existence of numberless worlds in space illim-

itable. Bolder than his teacher, and nearer to the truth, he passed far beyond the flaming ramparts of the universe, denied that there were any walls, and proclaimed the infinity of space. Space, he thought, is filled with ether, in which an infinite number of solar systems resembling our own, composed of similar materials, and inhabited by countless living creatures, move with freedom. Not a single atom in this stupendous complex can be lost or unaccounted for. There is no such thing as birth or death, as generation or dissolution, but only a continual passage of the infinite and homogeneous substance through successive phases of finite differentiated existence. This general conception of the universe, which coincides with that accepted at the present time by men of science, led Bruno to speculations involving a theory of evolutionary development, and to what would now be called the conservation of energy. Rejecting as untenable the dualism of mind and matter, he argued, from the presence of the intellect in man, and from the universality of form in all phenomena, that the

essence of the whole can best be grasped by our imagination under the analogy of life and spirit.

This brief summary of Bruno's system makes it evident to what a large extent he anticipated not only the philosophies of Descartes, Spinoza, Leibnitz, Hegel, but also the most recent conclusions of natural science. In his treatment of theology and ethics, he was no less original and prophetic. He solved the problem of evil by defining it to be a relative condition of imperfect development, not evil in itself, but evil to our partial vision. He denied that any Paradise or Golden Age preceded human history. In his opinion, the fall of man from a primal state of innocence and happiness is an absurdity in itself, contradicting all we know about the laws of growth. In morals he inclined toward determinism. Passing to theology in the strict sense of that term, he sketched in outline the comparative study of religions. It is obvious that he regarded no one creed as final, no sacred book as exclusively inspired, no single race as chosen, no

teacher or founder of a faith as specially divine, no Church as privileged with salvation.

To this point had the New Spirit advanced when outraged Catholicism, very naturally, logically, and consistently with the instinct of self-preservation, burned Bruno in 1600.

The synthesis of criticism and naturalism, which took this form with Bruno, a form usually described as idealism, though Bruno's own aim was to arrive at a probable conception of the universe as it actually exists, assumed a different aspect in another group of Italian thinkers, Pomponazzo, Telesio, Galileo, with the physicists, anatomists, and physiologists of Padua. Their line led up to Bacon, to inductive and experimental science.

It was my business in the present essay to analyse the main characteristics of the New Spirit in the Italian Renaissance. The history of Rationalism, or Naturalism, or Positive Philosophy during the last three centuries, and the sustained conflict of the New Spirit with dogmatic theology, is a subject too vast to be undertaken here. What the issue of that

conflict in the future will be is, I think, already certain. The struggle may continue, perhaps, for centuries, until the New Spirit shall have thoroughly imbued the modern mind, and Christianity be gradually purged of all that is decayed or obsolescent in its creed, retaining only that ethic which we owe to it, and which, though capable of being raised to higher stages, will remain the indestructible possession of the race.

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH

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It is not our purpose to dwell upon the biography of Mr. Clough, but rather to examine his works, and to show in what their real and vital excellence consists. Yet in order to understand these works, and to explain away some misconceptions which have arisen as to the alleged "wasted genius," "baffled intellect," "unfulfilled purpose," and "disappointed life" of Mr. Clough, which many of his critics bitterly deplore, we may preface our review of his poems by a short notice of this biography. His life, which was in no sense of the word an eventful one, falls naturally into three periods. The first embraces his childhood in America; his education at Rugby, under Dr. Arnold, by contact with whose character his own singularly conscientious tone of mind was strengthened to an almost morbid degree; and his Oxford

career. Clough entered upon his life at Oxford during the great Tractarian movement; and at an early period of his course he fell under the influence of Ward, the celebrated convert to Romanism. The struggles of this time seem to have entirely shaken his mind upon the most fundamental points of religious belief, and to have caused in him a painful and perturbed state of feeling, from which he was long in recovering. The immediate result of this disturbance appears to have been that he failed to take a first-class in the final examinations, greatly to the surprise and disappointment of his friends, and especially of Dr. Arnold, who expected the highest things from him. Gradually, however, he wore off this depression, and decided upon following up his career at Oxford. In pursuance of this resolve, he sought and obtained a fellowship at Oriel, and threw himself with energy into the educational work of his college for some years. But doubts as to the honesty of his remaining in this position seem to have survived from his old state of feeling, and to have grown upon him,

until the negative conclusions to which he was forced made him feel obliged to resign his tutorship at Oriel in 1848, and his fellowship soon after in the same year. The magnitude of this sacrifice to principle can only be understood by those who are most intimately acquainted with his private history, and who know to what pecuniary difficulties he was exposed by the failure of his hitherto certain income. It is enough to state that for the rest of his life the making of some money became a paramount necessity; and, as he was not a man who could mingle literary pursuits with business, or poetise in the intervals of harassing duties, his artistic productiveness was limited by the barest conditions of daily life. In 1849 the second period of his life began: it embraces his Italian journeys, during which he composed "Amours de Voyage" and "Dipsychus;" his Principalship of University Hall; and his residence in America. In 1853 he took work in the Educational Department of the Privy Council Office, and in the following year he was married. This introduces the third and last

period of his life. He worked regularly at his official duties, and also took an active interest and part for several years in the labours of his relative, Miss Florence Nightingale. Constant strain of work broke down his health, and he was obliged to travel in the spring and summer of 1861. In the course of this journey he caught a fever which ended his life at Florence at the age of forty-two.

Such is the briefest outline of Clough's life. Its chief value is to bring out the essential point that the "Bothie," "Amours de Voyage," "Dipsychus," and "Mari Magno"—the four principal monuments of his poetical genius—were all of them composed in the course of two short periods of holiday and relaxation: the first three during the quiet time which intervened between the first and second period we have marked, after he had broken with Oxford and when he had not yet engaged in other work; the last, immediately before his death and during his last journey. The poems themselves bear traces of the scenes and times that gave them birth. The "Bothie" is a rec-

ord of Highland reading parties; "Amours de Voyage" is full of Roman associations; "Dipsychus" carries us to Venice; "Mari Magno" combines the influences of a voyage across the Atlantic with several touches caught from Pyrenean, Swiss, and Greek scenery. In so true a sense were Clough's poems the product of his life, and so clearly were the powers of his genius limited, not by their own feebleness or by the wasting action of a morbid intellect, but by the lack of time and opportunity for fuller and more studied compositions. Indeed, we believe that none but those who judge Clough's life and writings by the lowest standard will maintain that his work was insufficient. On the contrary, if we regard the quality rather than the quantity of literary production, our feeling will be surprise at the mere amount of his poetry, especially if we reflect upon the nature of the topics which he handled, the conscientious scrupulosity of his nature, both as a poet and as a man, and the various distractions of his life. Clough had nothing of the self-conscious artist or of the ordinary *litterateur* about

him. His poems are not flashes on the surface, occasional pieces, or set compositions upon given themes; but the very pith and marrow of a deeply-thinking, deeply-feeling soul—the most heartfelt utterances of one who sought to speak out what was in him in the fewest and the simplest words. His horror of artificial language was often carried to excess. His hatred of affectation betrayed him into baldness. But one thing we may be sure to find in him—sincerity and sense.

Those, again, who can divest themselves of social and religious prejudices, and who are strong enough to breathe the fine, rare atmosphere of thought in which he moved, will acknowledge that it was not he who was irreligious, but that this reproach might rather be cast on those of us who blind our eyes, and palter with our conscience, and endeavor to impose our intellectual forms and fancies upon God. Clough happened to live during a period of transition in the history of human thought, when it was impossible for a thinking man to avoid problems by their very nature irresoluble

in one lifetime. Loving truth for its own sake, he laid himself open with singular purity and candour of mind to all the onward moving forces in the world around him. He did not try to make things other than he found them. He refused to tamper with his conscience for the sake of repose in the Romish, or of distinction in the English Church; nor yet was he inclined to buy freedom at the price of irreligion. Some natures are capable of these courses. Truth is not all-important to them; they acquiesce in traditional methods of holiness, and in the respectabilities of time-hallowed creeds. But Clough was by no means one of this sort. Manfully and boldly he admitted all the difficulties that occurred to his mind, faced them, scrutinized them, and maintained in spite of them an invincible confidence in the moral supremacy of good, and in the relation of his own soul to God. He had the strength to cast off much that was dear and honoured in his earliest beliefs, and to fling himself upon a sea of anxious questioning.

Determined to be free and independent, he resigned the valuable post he held as tutor and fellow of Oriel. And in all these things he triumphed: for no one gained a purer or keener insight into the *essence,* as distinguished from the *forms,* of religion and morality; no one grasped abstract truths more firmly; no one possessed a fuller humanity, or higher faculties of helping and sympathising with his fellow-men. It was the reality of his religion, its perfect simplicity, its comprehensiveness and spirituality, which made it unintelligible to men of duller intellects and less sensitively scrupulous consciences. They required something more definite than he could give them, something more rough and ready, more fitted for immediate use. They did not care if part of the truth were sacrificed so long as they had solid dogmas to repose upon, and comfortable hopes to cling to. But Clough dreaded everything like "adding up too soon" and incomplete conclusions. The insight which most men are impatient to exercise at the outset of life, he hoped might possibly be granted to him at its

end, or, if not then, in after stages of existence.

The chief value of Clough's religious poetry appears to consist in this—that he sympathised at a very early period with the movement that is unquestionably going on towards the simplification and purification of belief, and that he gave an artistic expression to the thoughts of earnest seekers and questioners in the field of faith. In doing so he did not innovate, or ruthlessly destroy, or sentimentally bewail the past. He simply tried to reduce belief to its original and spiritual purity—to lead men back to the God that is within them, witnessed by their consciences and by the history of the human race. The primal religious instincts of mankind are apt in the course of centuries to gather round them metaphysical husks, which are partly protective of the germs within, and partly restrictive of their true vitality. Times arrive at which these outward shells are felt to have become too hard and narrow. They must then be broken through in order to free the kernels that lie within them. The most clear-sighted men at such

periods try to discriminate between what is essential and what is unimportant in religion; but the majority cling always to the human and material rubbish with which it is clogged, as if it were the very living and life-giving divine truth. We might use Plato's simile, and compare the present condition of the Christian faith, as contrasted with the teaching of its great Founder, to the Glaucus of the deep, who rises overgrown with weeds and shells from the ocean, where he has been hidden. To pull away these weeds, and to restore the god-like form to its own likeness, is the desire of all thoughtful men whose minds have been directed to religious questions, and who have not bound themselves to support the existing order of things, or undertaken for their own interests to solidify the prejudices of the mass. Christ himself, by his answers to the questions of the Jews, taught us the principle of returning to simplicity in religious beliefs. He also, by his example, justified us in assuming that the Gospel is not stationary, but progressive; that we may come to know more of God than

we knew centuries ago; and that the human race, by extending its intelligence, extends its spiritual insight. It is from this point of view that Clough approaches topics of religious belief and Biblical inquiry.

"My own feeling," he says, "certainly does not go along with Coleridge, in attributing any special virtue to the facts of the Gospel history. They have happened, and have produced what we know, have transformed the civilisation of Greece and Rome and the barbarism of Gaul and Germany into Christendom. But I cannot feel sure that a man may not have all that is important in Christianity, even if he does not so much as know that Jesus of Nazareth existed. And I do not think that doubts respecting the facts related in the Gospels need give us much trouble. Believing that in one way or other the thing is of God, we shall in the end perhaps know in what way, and how far it was so. Trust in God's justice and love, and belief in his commands as written in our conscience, stand unshaken, though Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, or even St. Paul, were to fall."

Again he says, with the same confidence in spiritual truth which is the essence of belief in God:—

"It is far nobler to teach people to do what is good, because it is good simply, than for the sake of any future reward. It is, I dare say, difficult to keep up an equal

religious feeling at present, but it is not impossible, and is necessary. Besides, if *we* die and come to nothing, it does not therefore follow that life and goodness will cease to be in earth and heaven."

This thought is further expressed in a fragment of verse:—

"It fortifies my soul to know
That, though I perish, Truth is so:
That, howsoe'er I stray and range,
Whate'er I do, Thou dost not change.
I steadier step when I recall
That, if I slip, Thou dost not fall."

The power and dignity of this repose on what is great and good, this total unselfishness and confidence in the Unseen, belong to the highest sphere of religious faith. But it is not the religion of the emotions so much as of the intellect; and therefore it cannot be widely understood and accepted. When the hearer is bidden to discard his hopes of personal reward, and to embrace some exalted conception of the divine character more remote than that of old Anthropomorphism—when he is informed that neither at Jerusalem nor on this mountain must he worship, and that his God is in reality

a Spirit—he begins to murmur that there is nothing left for him to live by, no solid and substantial ground to stand upon, no sufficient inducements to virtuous action. And the preacher of so abstract and refined a faith is stigmatised as sceptical, if no worse name be given him. Thus Spinoza, who by the most intelligent men of this century has been represented as a God-absorbed, if not a "God-intoxicated" man, was called an Atheist for professing a theology, the essence of which might be summed up in the one proposition, that he loved God too much to want love back from Him again. And to ordinary minds he *was* Atheistical; for in their sense of the word God he had no God. He had refined and abstracted the idea until it vanished from the sphere of their intelligence.

One great quality of Clough's mind in regard to religion was its wholly undogmatic character. He regarded all problems with impartiality and calmness. One of his MSS. consists of a series of arguments in which he discusses the great question of belief. Nothing

could better illustrate his perfect openness of mind than this process of reasoning. It begins by stating the impossibility that scholars should not perceive "the entire uncertainty of history in general, and of the origin of Christianity in particular." In this position he coincides with all the fairest and profoundest thinkers of the century. Niebuhr, Grote, Sir Cornewall Lewis, Strauss, Baur, Renan, have all in their own departments shown the doubtfulness of early history, and have endeavored with more or less success to sift the truth from a mass of error. The historian of Christianity has greater difficulties to contend with than the historians of Rome or Greece; for he has no corroborative evidence of what is narrated in the sacred books, and all his endeavours to bring the truth to light meet with furious antagonism from minds wedded to the old system. But, continues Clough, it is equally impossible for a man who has lived and acted among men not to perceive the value of what is called Christianity. The more he is convinced of this, the less inclined will he be "to base it on those foundations

which, as a scholar, he feels to be unstable. MSS. are doubtful, records may be unauthentic, criticism is feeble, historical facts must be left uncertain." This then is the antithesis with which we have to deal: on the one hand, the history of the origin of Christianity involves the greatest amount of uncertainty; on the other hand, Christianity, as a real and vital principle, is indispensable to the world. Meanwhile, our own personal experience is small and limited; our own powers are narrow, and not to be relied on. "A sane and humble-minded man" (concludes Clough), who is disinclined to adopt the watchword of a party or to set up new views, has no alternative "but to throw himself upon the great Religious Tradition." One step is gained; but here another difficulty presents itself to the thinker. "I see not," he continues, "how any upright and strict dealer with himself, how any man, *not merely a slave to spiritual appetites, affections, and wants*—any man of intellectual as well as moral honesty (and without the former the latter is but a vain thing) can dare to affirm that the nar-

rative of the four Gospels is an essential integral part of that tradition." The words which we have italicised are peculiarly characteristic of Mr. Clough. He was sensitively, almost Quixotically, afraid of accepting even a respectable and harmless creed for the sake of merely being comfortable. He saw that in an age of doubt it was a sort of self-indulgence to cling to the old formulas of faith, and that, in one sense, honest questioning was less sceptical than conscious acquiescence. Pursuing this vein of reflection, he condemns the weakness of ignoring scientific or historic doubts "for the sake of the moral guidance and spiritual comfort" implied in submissive belief, or of "taking refuge in Romish infallibility." At the same time, he is eager to deny that there is anything great or noble or very needful in showing up the inconsistencies of the New Testament: "it is no new gospel to tell us that the old one is of doubtful authenticity." But cannot a simple-minded man steer between the opposite dangers of bragging Scepticism and Iconoclasm on the one hand, and, on the other,

of self-indulgent mysticism? "I believe that I may, without any such perversion of my reason, without any such mortal sin against my own soul, which is identical with reason, and against the Supreme Giver of that soul and reason, still abide by the real Religious Tradition." But "where," he asks, "since neither in rationalism nor in Rome is our refuge, where then shall we seek for the Religious Tradition?" The answer to this question is the answer which all good men and all sincere thinkers are becoming more and more ready to accept; it is the answer made by the Church in earlier days; the answer still implied in an old picture which represents Aristotle and Plato among the Apostles of Pentecost:—"Everywhere. But above all," he adds, "in our own work, in life, in action, in submission so far as action goes, in service, in experience, in patience, and in confidence." Then follows a very significant sentence which reveals to us the seriousness of Clough's mind upon this subject, his sense of its deep mystery, his persuasion that all a man's life is too little in the

search for God. "I would scarcely have any man dare to say that he has found it till that moment when death removes his power of telling it." The answer, however, requires to be expanded. We must look for the Religious Tradition everywhere, and not expect to find it in Protestantism only, or in the Roman Church, or in Unitarianism. Take the good from each and all. "Whether Christ died for us upon the cross I cannot tell; yet I am prepared to find some spiritual truth in the doctrine of the Atonement. Purgatory is not in the Bible; I do not therefore think it incredible." Again, we must seek it among clergymen, religious people, "among all who have really tried to order their lives by a high standard." Johnson, Hume, and Butler, each in his own way, contributes something to the total. Search the Scriptures, but also search the Laws of Menou and the Vedas, the Persian sacred books and Hafiz, Confucius, the Koran, Greek and Roman literature. Homer, Socrates, Plato, Lucretius, Virgil, Tacitus, can tell us something. This comprehensive-

ness and liberality of soul correspond with the true spirit of Christianity, of Christianity which is universal and divine because it is truly human; of Christianity which speaks alike to Jew and Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond and free, which needs no better evidence than that which is afforded by its parallels in India, China, Persia, Greece—the soul of man in every clime and age. Nor will this comprehensive creed render us less appreciative of Christianity itself. We may travel far and wide, yet not become disqualified for returning "to what assuredly, *primâ facie,* does appear to be—not indeed the religion of the majority of mankind—but the religion of the best, so far as we can judge in past history, and (despite of professed infidelity) of the most enlightened in our own time." To cease to be Christians, to separate ourselves from the peculiar form of Christianity adopted by our forefathers, would be unnatural, if not impossible; for special religions seem to be adapted to special races. Yet we may remember that there are many more Buddhists than Chris-

tians in the world, and not imagine that on us alone God's sun has shone. Finally, "it is much more the apparent dispensation of things that we should gradually widen than that we should narrow and individualize our creeds. Why are we daily coming more and more into communication with each other, if it be not that we learn each other's knowledge, and combine all into one? I feel more inclined to put faith in the current of the river of things than because it runs one way to think I must therefore pull hard against it to go the other."

But it is time to pass from these reflections on the nature of Religion to the poems in which Clough has embodied the fervent spirit of his creed. *Qui laborat, orat*—is the title of a few stanzas in which the poet questions whether it be not profane to give even the most abstract form to God, and concludes that work is the truest expression of earnest prayer. A similar train of thought is carried out in loftier language in another called "The New Sinai." After tracing the gradual development of the monotheistic idea, and adverting to the cloud

and darkness which in modern times have, through the influence of science on the one hand and superstition on the other, seemed to gather round the throne of God, he eloquently and emphatically expresses his content to trust and wait for the hour of God's own revelation. This is the essence of his religion—to believe in the Unseen, and bravely to embrace a faith without sight, instead of forging an image, and falling down to worship it. A third poem, of a strictly devout character, even more solemn in expression, more full of weighty and condensed thought, develops the same idea: its first stanza may be quoted as an index to the whole:—

> "O Thou, whose image in the shrine
> Of human spirits dwells divine;
> Which from that precinct once conveyed
> To be to outer day displayed,
> Doth vanish, part, and leave behind
> Mere blank and void of empty mind,
> Which wilful fancy seeks in vain
> With casual shapes to fill again."

It is very difficult for those who did not know Clough personally to gather from such

notices as we can give, how deep and fervent—how absolute and unshaken—were his religious convictions. But the witnesses of his life are unanimous in assuring us that the principles expressed in the poems we have quoted were the fixed and unvarying rules of his own conduct, the supporting and strengthening springs of his action in the world. Contrasted with these devotional poems are some of a more analytical character, which, however, tend to the same conclusion, that God, falsely figured by the world to itself in various fanciful or obsolete shapes, or else denied with insolence and scorn, is yet supreme and spiritual, felt by those who have preserved an honest and untainted soul, and dreaded with blind terror even by those who pretend to disbelieve in him. Of these, two songs in "Dipsychus," "I dreamed a dream," and its companion, "There is no God the wicked saith" (published in the volume of collected poems), may be cited as specimens. An ironical tone runs through them, and is strangely blended with bitterness, gravity, and a kind of tender regret. They

ought not to be separated; for nothing is more true of Clough's mind than that it worked by thesis and antithesis, not reaching a clear synthesis, but pushing its convictions, as it were, to the verge of a conclusion. The poems, for instance, which begin, "Old things need not be therefore true," "What we, when face to face we see," and "Say not, the struggle nought availeth," are in their tone almost timid and retrogressive when compared with "Easter Day"; and yet we feel that none of them contain the *dernier mot.* Clough could take the world's or the devil's point of view with wonderful force and vigor. This is clear throughout "Dipsychus"; but it also appears in a published poem, entitled, "The Latest Decalogue." To imagine that when he did so he was expressing his *own* view would be to mistake the artist's nature altogether. Yet some people are so dull as to do this. They are shocked at any one venturing to state a base or wicked opinion, even though his object be to call attention to the contrary, and by revealing ugliness, to lead the eye in silence to the contemplation of beauty.

In Clough's works there are many stumbling-blocks for such readers—none greater than "Easter Day," a poem about which it is hard to speak, whether we regard its depth of meaning or its high literary excellence. Of the general scope of this poem it is impossible to give a better account than that which is prefixed to it in the volume of "Letters and Remains." There it is styled "a semi-dramatic expression of the contrast he (Clough) felt between the complete practical irreligion and wickedness of the life he saw going on, and the outward forms and ceremonies of religion displaying themselves at every turn. How can we believe, it seems to say, that "Christ is risen" in such a world as this? How, if it was so, could such sin and such misery continue until now? Yet if we must give up this faith, what sadness and what bitterness of disappointment remain for all believers who thus lose all that is most dear to them! And he abandons himself to this feeling of grief and hopelessness, only still vaguely clinging to the belief that in earth itself there may be, if no-

where else, a new refuge and a new answer to this sad riddle. The mood of mind which he depicts in such terrible colours is not to be regarded as his own habitual belief. The poem is in no sense a statement of facts or opinions, but a strong expression of feeling—above all, the feeling of the greatness of the evil which is in the world." More, however, remains to be said. For though "Easter Day" "is not to be regarded as his own habitual belief," we cannot but consider it to be the expression of a mind steeped in the disintegrating solvents of nineteenth-century criticism. The author has clearly absorbed everything that German commentators have to say upon the subject of the resurrection—nay, more, has, at least at one time of his life, most keenly felt the cogency of their destructive arguments, and in a mood of bitterness provoked by human degradation has given the form of fiery language to the shapeless and uncertain doubts which crowd the minds of a beliefless generation. "Easter Day" is unique in the history of literature. It is a poem fully worthy of that

name, in which a train of close and difficult reasoning is expressed in concise words—such words as might have been used by a commentator on the Gospels, yet so subtly manipulated by the poet, with such a rhythm, such compactness, such vitality of emotion, as to attain the dignity of art by mere simplicity and power.

For the sake of those who may not have this poem in their hands, we subjoin some extracts. But it must be remembered that quotation in this case is akin to mutilation, and that the poem itself is liable to be misunderstood in its incomplete form:—

"Through the great sinful streets of Naples as I past,
With fiercer heat than flamed above my head
My heart was hot within me; till at last
My brain was lightened when my tongue had said—
Christ is not risen!
Christ is not risen, no—
He lies and moulders low;
Christ is not risen!

* * * * *

"What if the women, ere the dawn was grey,
Saw one or more great angels, as they say
(Angels, or Him himself)? Yet neither there, nor then,
Nor afterwards, nor elsewhere, nor at all,

Hath He appeared to Peter or the Ten;
Nor, save in thunderous terror, to blind Saul;
Save in an after Gospel and late Creed,
He is not risen, indeed—
Christ is not risen!

* * * * *

"Is He not risen, and shall we not rise?
Oh, we unwise!
What did we dream, what wake we to discover?
Ye hills, fall on us, and ye mountains, cover!
In darkness and great gloom
Come ere we thought it is *our* day of doom;
From the cursed world, which is one tomb,
Christ is not risen!

"Eat, drink, and play, and think that this is bliss:
There is no heaven but this;
There is no hell,
Save earth, which serves the purpose doubly well,
Seeing it visits still
With equallest apportionments of ill
Both good and bad alike, and brings to one same dust
The unjust and the just
With Christ, who is not risen.

"Eat, drink, and die, for we are souls bereaved:
Of all the creatures under heaven's wide cope
We are most hopeless, who had once most hope,
And most beliefless, that had most believed.
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust;
As of the unjust, also of the just—
Yea, of that Just One too!
It is the one sad Gospel that is true—
Christ is not risen!

"Weep not beside the tomb,
Ye women, unto whom
He was great solace while ye tended Him;
Ye who with napkin o'er the head

And folds of linen round each wounded limb
Laid out the Sacred Dead;
And thou that bar'st Him in thy wondering womb;
Yea, Daughters of Jerusalem, depart,
Bind up as best ye may your own sad bleeding heart:
Go to your homes, your living children tend,
Your earthly spouses love;
Set your affections *not* on things above,
Which moth and rust corrupt, which quickliest come to end:
Or pray, if pray ye must, and pray, if pray ye can,
For death; since dead is He whom he deemed more than man,
Who is not risen: no,—
But lies and moulders low,—
Who is not risen!

* * * * *

"And, oh, good men of ages yet to be,
Who shall believe *because* ye did not see—
Oh, be ye warned, be wise!
No more with pleading eyes,
And sobs of strong desire,
Unto the empty vacant void aspire,
Seeking another and impossible birth
That is not of your own, and only mother earth.
But if there is no other life for you,
Sit down and be content, since this must even do:
He is not risen!"

It must not be thought that religious problems are the only ones which occupied the mind of Mr. Clough. On the contrary, whatever is important in the life of man attracted his eager thought, and received from him the same minute and scrupulous consideration. His large humanity was one of his most prominent qualities; nor was there anything of real or of serious significance, however painful, in the world from which he shrank. Two principal topics beside that of religion seem to have been always present to his mind. One of these was the question of love, the other of action, or of work in life. We shall now proceed to consider his poetical treatment of both of these points, which, together with religion, form the most important subjects that a poet can approach.

Passing from Clough's religious poems to those in which he has dealt in detail with the problems of human life and love, we may make the preliminary remark that here, as in his more abstract compositions, he is manly and clairvoyant—unflinching—affecting noth-

ing, and avoiding nothing which he sees to be true and weighty in the facts presented to his notice. Though minutely analytical—as, for instance, in "Dipsychus" and some parts of "Amours de Voyage"—he is never morbidly so. We feel his personality as we do that of all true and sincere poets; and perhaps these poems are a better record of that personality than any memoirs which could possibly be written. But there is nothing self-conscious or unhealthily introspective in this revelation of himself. What strikes us in these poems of the second class is their perfect sincerity and truth to life. They are like pictures painted from natural objects in the fair light of day—no Fuseli or Blake translations from a world of spirits and of murky gloom. Nor is this impression altered where the remote and uncommon nature of his subject obliges him to have recourse to psychological anatomy. We find no "supreme moments," no passionate and fiery experiences in which life is lost as in a furnace glow, either in his philosophy or his art. He yields, indeed, its full part to pas-

sion, but a far larger part to law—the law of conscience and humanity. The pathos that he stirs is of no maudlin or sentimental kind, but is purely natural and sincere—gushing, as in the last story of Mari Magno, from the flinty rock of fact and dire necessity. In this respect he is a kind of better Crabbe; more full of natural tenderness and fine distinctions, if less sternly powerful and less deeply tragic.

But if Clough has nothing in common with poets of the De Musset type, he is equally far removed from the trivial domesticities of the "Angel in the House." Clough was not, indeed, a misogynist or indifferent to marriage. On the contrary, a great number of his poems prove that the problems of married love and life were among those which most deeply occupied his mind. But he did not shut his eyes and dream that the Englishman's paradise of a clean hearth and a kind wife is the only object of existence, or, that if it were, it would be easy to obtain entrance into it. The patient insight, refusing to be deceived by any illusion, however sweet, in its unwavering cour-

age, which we have traced in his treatment of religion, appears no less in his treatment of love. He is able to see men and women as they are, very imperfect in their affections, often too weak even to love without an *arrière pensée,* letting priceless opportunity slip by, and killing the flower of one part of their nature by the drought and dryness of the other part.

In attempting to illustrate these general remarks by an analysis of Clough's poems, we might begin with a notice of the tales called "Mari Magno," the last of his works, and therefore in some ways the ripest product of his mind. But these tales are already *in extenso* before the public, and are so likely to be the most popular portion of his works, that we may perhaps content ourselves with reference to them. The first two are very speculative. Their moral seems to be that love is fellow-service, and that the *à peu près* of human relations must be accepted cheerfully. To follow the absolute, and to expect to realize an ideal, is vain. Let life school us to love

as men, with the whole force, indeed, of our natures, but with no fantastic yearnings after impossibilities. If we fail to learn these lessons, and refuse the natural good of human life, we shall be disciplined with disappointment. The thought of these two poems is so subtle—so delicately shadowed forth and illuminated with cross lights—that in order to present a faithful picture of them, it would be necessary to transcribe the tales themselves. The rest are more simple. They have less of speculation and more of incident and human pathos. Indeed, the story called "Christian," or the Lawyer's Second Tale, is one of the most dramatic poems of its kind in the English language. When we remember that this story was actually completed during Clough's last hours, while paralysis was rapidly invading the very stronghold of life, it forms the most convincing proof of the genuine and irresistible force of his poetic genius.

"Amours de Voyage" is, perhaps, the most highly finished, various, and artistically complete of all his works. It consists of a series of

letters supposed to be written from Rome by an Englishman called Claude, and two sisters of a family of Trevellyns whose acquaintance he made there. It was composed by Clough at Rome in 1848, during the short life of Mazzini's Republic and the French siege. The chief incidents of this stirring time are so wrought into the narrative part of the poem as to contrast in a striking manner with the Hamlet-like indecision of the hero's character. *"Il doutait de tout, même de l'amour"* is one of the mottoes on the title-page; and the last two couplets of the "Envoy" well describe the peculiar contrast which runs through the whole work:—

"Say, 'I am flitting about many years from brain unto brain of
Feeble and restless youths born to inglorious days;
But,' so finish the word, 'I was writ in a Roman chamber,
When from Janiculan heights thundered the cannon of France.'"

"Amours de Voyage" has three distinct subjects: the criticism of Rome from a traveller's point of view, involving many religious and æsthetical reflections; politics and the

events of the siege; and the love-story of an over-refined and irresolute spirit. The two former topics are gradually merged in the last. Indeed, they serve chiefly to enliven the poem, and to illustrate the character of the sceptical hero and his ladylike inamorata. Clough has managed with great delicacy to introduce the theme of love, at first quite incidentally, into Claude's letters, and to let it grow by degrees until it swallows up the others, and forms the whole subject of the poem. But it must not be imagined that the love-story is the only important part of "Amours de Voyage." On the contrary, there is a singular richness in the woof and texture of this poem, a variety which we miss in compositions like "Werther," or "Maud." The descriptions of character are humorous and racy. Very delicate satire, for instance, adds an interest to Miss Georgina's letters; and the whole Trevellyn family is hit off with dramatic nicety. Claude himself appears before us as a many-sided man, and we get a good notion of his personality long before his love-drama begins.

Claude is a young English gentleman, well born and well connected, but naturally shy and rather satirical. His education has rendered him fastidious; and he is by temperament inclined to dream and meditate and question rather than to act. We soon find that he has the trick of introspection, and of nineteenth-century yearning after the impossible. It is curious that in his delineation of this state of mind Clough should remind us of Alfred de Musset—his antipodes in moral tone and mental calibre. Yet it is so. Both poets describe the *maladie du siècle*—the nondescript cachexy, in which aspiration mingles with disenchantment, satire and scepticism with a child-like desire for the tranquility of reverence and belief—in which self-analysis has been pushed to the verge of monomania, and all springs of action are clogged and impeded by the cobwebs of speculation. But while De Musset presents us with a French picture of this condition, very feeble, sickly, and disagreeable, Clough is true to the national vigour of the English character. We cannot mistake the

irony with which he treats Claude, or fall into the error of identifying him with the poet.

Claude's first letters are devoted to the impressions produced on his mind by Rome. "Rubbishy" is the best word he can find to express the Eternal City: indeed, it resembles its own Monte Testaceo, a "mass of broken and castaway wine-pots." In the midst of such grumblings a hint is dropped of a family called Trevellyn, who, a letter further on, are thus cleverly described:—

"Middle-class people these, bankers very likely, not wholly
Pure of the taint of the shop; will at table-d'hôte and restaurant
Have their shilling's worth, their penny's pennyworth even:
Neither man's aristocracy this, nor God's, God knoweth!
Yet they are fairly descended, they give you to know, well connected;
Doubtless somewhere, in some neighbourhood have, and are careful to keep, some
Threadbare genteel relations, who in their turn are enchanted
Grandly among country-people to introduce at assemblies
To the unpennied cadets our cousins with excellent fortunes.
Neither man's aristocracy this, nor God's, God knoweth!"

Meantime Claude begins to make way with these Trevellyns. He owns it is pleasant to be with them. His aristocratic refinement and fastidious tastes are even shocked at finding that he delights in "pleasing inferior people." But, after all, it is only a matter of accident and travelling sociability, of—

"Juxtaposition, in short; and what is juxtaposition?"

This supplies him with much food for very Cloughian contemplation. Meantime, a few scraps from the Miss Trevellyns to their friends introduce us to these young ladies, and let us know that Mary thinks Mr. Claude "a superior man," but "terribly selfish"; and so the first canto ends. The second opens with Italian politics. Claude sympathises with the patriots more than he chooses to admit, or than his habits of disdainful self-analysis permit him to be aware of. Once or twice he flashes into real enthusiasm; but he never gives himself a free rein. In the midst of details about the siege, and of wonderings whether he would be prepared in the event of danger "to

lay down his life for the British female," he exclaims: "I am in love, meantime, you think?" and after, for the space of ten lines, articulating the charms of Mary's feminine good taste and sense, decides that he "is not exactly." Then follows letter after letter about love. Claude is clearly getting into the thick of it—summoning to his aid all his heavy casuistical battalions and squadrons of light sophistry. The real misery of a state of mind like Claude's is, that it produces a confusion in the moral instincts; the higher, as well as the lower parts of the nature, become objects of dread and suspicion. Claude fears sophistication in every virtue, and is nervously alarmed by his own impulses. It may easily be conceived that he puzzles the Trevellyns not a little. Georgina thinks Mr. Claude "really is too shilly-shally," and induces her own *fiancé* to sound him with regard to his intentions as to her sister Mary. The third canto opens with a series of similar reflections, for Claude is now in the very centre of indifference, having cast off the No, and not yet reached the Yes of loving.

Then he takes up a question which he had suggested at an earlier period. "What is Juxtaposition?" We travel in a railway-train, and, to pass the time, talk with the girl we find next to us. This is a true allegory of most marriages. Yet we prate at the same time about "eternal ties and marriages made in heaven." But if we *really* believed in this pretence—if the bridegroom *really* thought he was linked for ever to the bride—if he did not foresee the release of burial while he signed the bond of matrimony—how do you think he would then accept his situation? Claude's friend seems to hint that Juxtaposition may be great, but that Affinity is greater. "Ah!" says Claude, "there are many affinities of different degrees and forces:—

> "But none, let me tell you,
> Save by the law of the land and the ruinous force of the will, ah,
> None, I fear me, at last quite sure to be final and perfect."

Yet, he sighs, it is pleasant to be deluded, and the love-makings of the earth are very beautiful:—

"Could we eliminate only
This vile hungering impulse, this demon within us of craving,
Life were beatitude, living a perfect divine satisfaction."

But soon another word, more abrupt than Affinity, more cogent than Juxtaposition, breaks the serene sphere of his dubitations like a bombshell. It is Obligation. His intentions are asked. Mary, indeed, has herself never held him bound in any way; and this is one of her charms in his eyes. Every morning he may meet her afresh, and find no old debts to pay. But just as Claude is on the eve of starting for Florence with the Trevellyns and their Vernon friends, one of the latter hints that he ought to declare himself one way or the other. Thereupon Claude breaks loose, and excuses himself from the party:—

"How could I go? Great heavens! to conduct a permitted flirtation
Under those vulgar eyes, the observed of such observers."

This brings us to the fourth canto, when Claude, having let his opportunity slip, and

missed, as he expresses it, the tide in his love affairs, feels an irresistible desire to be again, at any cost, with Mary Trevellyn. He leaves Rome; but they have left Florence,—for Milan, it appears. Then follows a weary chase after them, through Bellagio, over the Splügen, the Stelvio; back again to Como, Florence, Pisa, and Rome. Every place is searched; every friend applied to. But by a natural accident of travelling, when once missed, they cannot be caught up again. The whole of this fifth canto is occupied with hurryings to and fro, blank researches, and vain self-reproaches. There is something piteous and pathetic in its feverishness. Mary Trevellyn, in the meantime, is at Lucerne, waiting, not without anxiety, for Claude, and ready, it is clear, to make him happy. Indeed, we feel that it is very stupid on the part of Claude to give her up after so short a pursuit. He is meant, however, to be a poor creature, distracted by his own waywardness of speculation, and confused in his impulses. "Amours de Voyage" concludes with a series of those

dubiations, halts, and turning-points of thought, in which Clough delighted as an artist, and which serve, with admirable irony and humour, to pourtray the feebleness of Claude.

We have entered so fully into the analysis of this poem that there is little need for comment. Yet we cannot refrain from calling attention to its subtle discussion of a subject which to most men is so simple. Clough shows us in the character of Claude the effect of a speculative intellect acting upon the instincts and affections. We can scarcely wonder that Clough is not more generally read and admired, because the problems with which he is occupied are rare and remote. There are but few characters like Claude in the world. Indeed, it might be wondered, whether it is worth while commemorating those perplexed and sceptical conditions of the consciousness in verse. Ought a poet not rather to lead the world, and to show the ultimate truth, than to represent the waverings of a discontented spirit ill at ease? Clough's vindication, however, lies in this: first, that it is the poet's function to hold up a

mirror to his age, as well as to lead it; and secondly, that we still admire Hamlet and Faust. Claude belongs to the same race as these princes of metaphysical perplexity. However exceptional, his scepticism is natural to himself, and to the temper of his century. In painting him, Clough reproduced the experience which he obtained from commerce with the world, and drew a picture of his times.

Omitting all notice of the "Bothie," the best known of Clough's works, we may now proceed to discuss "Dipsychus," a dramatic composition which has not yet been given to the public. This fact, besides the intrinsic importance of the poem, which contains in the most condensed form, all Clough's speculations about life and action, must be our excuse for the length of the extracts we propose to make, and for the minuteness of our analysis. Hitherto we have seen him occupied with the problems of Religion and Love. Having shown us the corrosive action of the human intellect in both of these fields he comes forward to dis-

play the further operation of this sceptical *aqua fortis* upon the philsophy of Life itself in Dipsychus. The hero of this poem is not, like Hamlet, indisposed to fulfil a single and difficult duty; or, like Faust, exhausted with the world of thought; or, like Claude, unnerved for decision and unable to obey his instincts. His difficulties are deeper, and more general. He passes in review the whole casuistry of Life, and Duty, and Action, involving religion, love, and morality, in his speculation. The theme of the poem is therefore, in some sense, the metaphysic or supreme abstraction of Human Doubt.

It was written at a period of the poet's life when he was thinking and feeling deeply about the choice of work. Oxford had been given up. University Hall, in London, had not proved very satisfactory. Clough felt the need of action, without confidence in any special sort of action. Subtle analysis and high aspirations seemed to unfit him for the coarser work of the world. Mere pleasure or the luxury of living or domestic felicity could not sat-

isfy the whole of such a nature. He asked himself, What is to be done? What is the value of any work that a man can do? How shall we preserve the soul's virginity upon the crowded highways of the world? Is it worth while to sacrifice beautiful illusions for doubtful truths of fact? Is it right to exchange the poet's golden sunset skies for the world's palpable coin—itself the root of all evil as well as of all comfort?

These meditations are cast in the mould of a dialogue between a man's soul and a spirit. But the title "Dipsychus" seems to intimate that the spirit is but a mode of the soul which externalises itself. Or, to speak more clearly, this spirit is not the true man, but it is that second self which usage with the world and the unnumbered centuries of human tradition have imposed upon the soul. Clough calls him Mephistopheles and Belial. He is made to name himself Cosmarchon or Cosmocrator:—

> "This worldly fiend that follows you about,
> This compound of convention and impiety,
> This mongrel of uncleanness and propriety."

He is in truth the spirit of this world, the spirit of fact and reality, as opposed to aspirations and ideals, the spirit of those conditions under which men have to labour in their commerce with the world; the spirit of those lower necessities which environ action. Reflection, it was long ago said by the philosophers, belongs to God and to godlike men. But action is proper to mankind and to the mass of human beings. By cleaving to action we renounce our heavenly birthright of contemplation. Yet if we confine ourselves to reflection and aspiration, we separate ourselves from the life of men. No one has yet solved the problem of acting without contracting some stain of earth.

The form of Dipsychus and the character of the Spirit remind us of Faust, and prove that Clough was to a certain extent influenced by Goethe's great work. But the problems agitated by Clough are of a more subtle and spiritual nature than those which Goethe raised. They are worked out with less attention to artistic finish and dramatic effect than the speculations which underly the play of

"Faust." In their narrow compass they strike many students as being more forcible in thought and more full of feeling than the meditative scenes of Goethe's drama. Clough was content to be wholly undramatic and monotonous. Instead of presenting us with numerous highly-coloured pictures, he dissected a portion of the troubled brain of one man with marvellous skill and delicacy. Thus the two works are essentially different in their scope and aim; and the resemblance between them is superficial. Besides, the Spirit in "Dipsychus" has not much in common with the Mephistopheles of Goethe. We find in "Dipsychus" no tempter beyond the casuist that everyone carries in his bosom; no contract but that which everyone makes when he leaves the Thebaid of his contemplation for the service and the pay of the great world; no greater duality of existence than that which every self-conscious man of the century contains within his own nature. The dialogues of Dipsychus and the Spirit are the communings of a heart given to self-examination. Their strife is a

modern version of the old battle carried on between the spirit and the flesh, or rather between St. Paul's Pneumatic and Psychic, spiritual and natural, man. But the strife is even, and no Zeus holds the balance. The combatants are twins, inseparable in this life. The one that is the stronger, though confessedly the viler, rules the other, because he conformed to the existing conditions under which the individual is forced to live and act. The fate of the forlorn, indignant, and defrauded soul is hidden from us at the end. Dipsychus seeks to act as a man, and not to keep aloof from human passions and the pains of life; but in doing so he falls, and is entangled in the snares of the world. It is hard to say how Clough intended his drama to conclude. The second part of "Dipsychus," as we have it, is incomplete. But so far as one can judge from this fragment, one is surprised at the commonplace and rather vulgar *dénouement* which the poet seems to have designed. It contrasts so strangely with the elevated and subtle tone of the first part, and forms so distinct a bathos

or anti-climax, that we are disposed to abandon any attempt at its interpretation, believing that in its present mutilated state it cannot be fairly criticised, and to confine our attention to the first part. This part consists of a series of short scenes, which fall naturally into two chief groups. In the first of these groups Dipsychus and the Spirit discuss several questions of theology and social ethics, setting forth in broad and well-defined contrast the double point of view which may be taken by a scrupulous and an easy conscience; the discord between the spirit of the Gospel and the spirit of the world; and the divergence between a craving after spiritual things and an acquiescence in the order of carnal and conventional routine. The second group is devoted exclusively to the casuistry of action.

"Dipsychus" opens at Venice, with a reminiscence of "Easter Day." Though the scene is changed, and months have passed, the old refrain of "Christ is not risen," keeps running in the poet's head. The Resurrection, in any real and modern sense of the word, is just as

inconceivable at Venice as at Naples. The spirit of Christianity is just as absent from the Rialto as from the Toledo. While Dipsychus is repeating the opening lines of "Easter Day," the Spirit intervenes and begins to criticise it:—

> "Dear, how odd!
> He'll tell us next there is no God.
> I thought 'twas in the Bible plain,
> On the third day He rose again."

The Spirit accepts all that the world has agreed to believe—all the *ὁμολογουμένα* and stereotyped conventions of his Church and State. Theology and metaphysics, indeed, are not his trade. But he recommends general religious observances as a matter of prudential policy, and occupies a pew on Sundays in obedience to the third commandment of his own amended Decalogue:—

> "Oh,
> You'll go to church, of course, you know;
> Or, at the least, will take a pew
> To send your wives and servants to.
> Trust me, I make a point of that;
> No infidelity,—that's flat."

On the present occasion at Venice, however, he prefers to enjoy the sun, and watch the humours of the crowd on the Piazza. Dipsychus converses with him, sullenly enough, and they carry on their dialogue through a visit to the Public Gardens, where the higher musings of the man are constantly broken with ever so slight a revelation of the spirit's carnal nature. Dipsychus is disgusted, and exclaims:—

"O moon and stars, forgive! and thou, clear heaven,
Look pureness back into me. Oh, great God!
Why, why, in wisdom and in grace's name,
And in the name of saints and saintly thoughts,
Of mothers, and of sisters, and chaste wives,
And angel woman-faces we have seen,
And angel woman-spirits we have guessed,
And innocent sweet children, and pure love,
Why did I ever one brief moment's space
But parley with this filthy Belial?
. Was it the fear
Of being behind the world, which is the wicked?"

But when he has regained his hotel, the Spirit begins once more to reason with him on the duties of society, and the necessities of acquiescence in the ways of the world. Social conventions are discussed; Dipsychus fretting against formal lies and diplomacy of manners

and outward show, the Spirit proving how wise it is to leaven our sincerity with tact, our purity with *savoir faire,* the dove with the serpent, piety with polish. His final argument on all these points is that,—

> "What we all love is good touched up with evil:
> Religion's self must have a spice of devil."

Or again:—

> "Life little loves; 'tis true, this peevish piety;
> E'en they with whom it thinks to be securest—
> Your most religious, delicatest, purest—
> Discern and show, as pious people can,
> Their feeling that you are not quite a man."

The same argument is reasoned on a different thesis, after Dipsychus has been insulted by a Croat, and the Spirit is urging him to seek satisfaction. Here, as before, Dipsychus wants to adhere to the pure precepts of the Gospel. The Spirit shows how unfit they are for actual life, and sums up with a crushing satire on his comrade's peaceful mood.

In the next scene we are on our way to the Lido, and the question, "Is there no God?" is being reasoned by the two spirits—Dipsychus taking the mournful and regretful side, ex-

pressing the sadness of a soul that longs to believe in a God and hears it knelled that there is none, while the Spirit makes the best of things, and shows that we can get on very well without one. The little song, "There is no God, the wicked saith," occurs in this scene. In the second Act—if we may use this word to express the group of unconnected scenes which follow—we are brought to consider the great problem of the choice of work. Here we may admire that subtlety of modern thought, which seeks no longer with the ancient philosophers a Criterion of Happiness or Knowledge, or with the theologians a Criterion of Faith, but which, having, as it were, abandoned happiness, knowledge, and faith, as hopeless and irresoluble questions, to their fate, is no less puzzled to discover the Criterion of Life itself —of Action—of a man's place in the world of men. This part opens with a further discussion of the thoughts suggested by "Easter Day," in which the Spirit takes occasion to develop his religious opinions, and thus impresses their practical result upon Dipsychus:—

"Take larger views (and quit your Germans)
From the Analogy and Sermons;
I fancied, you must doubtless know,—
Butler had proved, an age ago,
That in religious, as profane things,
'Twas useless trying to explain things;
Men's business-wits, the only sane things,
These and compliance are the main things.
God, Revelation, and the rest of it,
Bad at the best, we make the best of it.
Like a good subject and wise man,
Believe whatever things you can.
Take your religion as 'twas found you,
And say no more of it, confound you!"

Then, while afloat in his gondola, Dipsychus begins to wish that all life were after this wise:—

"How light we move, how softly! Ah,
Were life but as the gondola!
So live, nor need to call to mind
Our slaving brother here behind!"

The contemplative indisposition for action in Dipsychus is mocked and baffled by the perplexing and tormenting riddles which the inequalities of the world offer to his mind. Life might be beautiful, and enjoyable, and easy, he thinks, were it not for a craving within us after the unseen, and could we divest ourselves

of all sympathy for our toiling, suffering fellow-creatures. In this mood, riches and luxurious pleasures seem to him "mere insolence and wantonness." But the Spirit, as may be imagined, shares none of these difficulties. He sings "How pleasant it is to have money, heigho!" and sums up his Welt-philosophie in two common-place stanzas:—

"The world is very odd, we see,
We do not comprehend it;
But in one fact we all agree,
God won't, and we can't mend it.

"Being common sense, it can't be sin
To take it as I find it;
The pleasure to take pleasure in;
The pain, try not to mind it."

To these verses Dipsychus replies with the exquisite lines, "O let me love my love unto myself, alone," which have been printed in the volume of Clough's published poems.

In the next scene Dipsychus resolves to commune more seriously with the Spirit, and to question him. The design is scarcely formed before the Spirit is at his elbow, and Dipsychus, after some hesitation, asks:—

"Should I form, a thing to be supposed,
A wish to bargain for your merchandise,
Say what were your demands?—what were your terms?—
What should I do? What should I cease to do?
What incense on what altars must I burn?
And what abandon? What unlearn or learn?
Religion goes, I take it."

By no means, replies the Spirit. We have here no blood-signed contract, no tragic price of soul's damnation for the pomps and pleasures of the flesh. All you have to do is to follow the world's ways — take orders, if you like, but keep within the serviceable limits of routine religion, and do not indulge in vague emotions. If that does not suit you, choose the law. Marry, too, by all means; and—

"Trust one who knows you,
You'll make an admirable Sposo."

This is the result of the incarnation. Dipsychus, with his high-flown aspirations and shy sensitiveness, is cast upon a sea of doubt. He seeks action, and has to choose between two common-place professions. The Spirit of the world tempts him with no magnificent pleasures, with no promises of power. Sneering at

him, he offers in exchange for his soul's virginity the merest humdrum of diurnal life in a marriage without illusions and a business without enthusiasms. Dipsychus is fairly staggered:—

> "I had hoped
> Midst weakness, indolence, frivolity,
> Irresolution, still had hoped; and this
> Seems sacrificing hope."

Would it not be better, he asks, to wait—to let inferior opportunities slip by, and to seize the supreme chance of heroic action when it comes? But what if, when it comes, we should prove incapable of seizing it or using it by want of action? Is it not safer to engage in the great battle as a common soldier, and work up to the captaincy?—

> "High deeds
> Haunt not the fringy edges of the fight,
> But the pell-mell of men."

Yet again there is danger in this course. We may reasonably fear—

> "In the deft trick
> Of prentice handling to forget great art,
> To base mechanical adroitness yield
> The Inspiration and the Hope a Slave!"

Ah, but suppose I relinquish action altogether? Even that is unsafe:—

"Contamination taints the idler first."

I will away with hesitation, at last he cries, and obey my instinct—if only, alas! I had an instinct!—

"No, no:
The life of instinct has, it seems, gone by,
And will not be forced back. And to live now,
I must sluice out myself into canals,
And lose all force in ducts. The modern Hotspur
Shrills not his trumpet of 'To Horse, To Horse!'
But consults columns in a Railway Guide."

But even thus to act, humbly and by routine, might be sufficient for the yearnings of the soul, if only we could believe that the work done were worth doing, and that we were integral and indispensable parts of the life of the great world:—

"If indeed it work,
And is not a mere treadmill! which it may be,
Who can confirm it is not? We ask action,
And dream of arms and conflict; and string up
All self-devotion's muscles; and are set
To fold up papers. To what end?—we know not.
Other folks do so; it is always done;
And it perhaps is right."

After all, if really bidden to bathe in this common-place Jordan of unapparent efficacy, let us bathe. "I submit." As an echo to this word the Spirit is heard from within singing:—

> "Submit, submit!
> 'Tis common sense and human wit
> Can claim no higher name than it."

Still, though on the verge of action, Dipsychus wavers. Is he now, so swiftly and irrevocably, "to lose in action, passion, talk, the soul?" To abandon, for the uncertain good of work in the world, those moments of illumination which have come upon him hitherto at intervals, and seemed to solve the riddle?—

> "O happy hours!
> O compensation ample for long days
> Of what impatient tongues call wretchedness!"
> "No, no!
> I am contented, and will not complain.
> To the old paths, my soul! O, be it so!
> I bear the work-day burden of dull life
> Above these footsore flags of a weary world,
> Heaven knows how long it has not been; at once,
> Lo! I am in the Spirit on the Lord's day
> With John in Patmos. Is it not enough,
> One day in seven? and if this should go,

If this pure solace should desert my mind,
What were all else? I dare not risk this loss.
To the old paths, my soul!"

Overhearing this soliloquy, the Spirit gibes:—

"Oh, yes.
To moon about religion; to inhume
Your ripened age in solitary walks,
For self-discussion; to debate in letters
Vext points with earnest friends; past other men
To cherish natural instincts, yet to fear them
And less than any use them
. to pervert
Ancient real facts to modern unreal dreams,
And build up baseless fabrics of romance
And heroism upon heroic sand;
To burn forsooth, for action, yet despise
Its merest accidence and alphabet."

* * * * *

"Once in a fortnight say, by lucky chance,
Of happier-tempered coffee, gain (great Heaven!)
A pious rapture."

We regret that our space admits of only these broken extracts from a speech which is full of the most searching satire on a scholar's solitary life—of irony terrible in its remorseless truth—of worldly wisdom crushing down in proud superiority of strength the dreamy

aspirations of a timid soul. Dipsychus, stung and quickened by a sense of his own impotence and by the ruthless logic of the carping voice, cries with a return of discontented determination:—

"Must it be, then? So quick upon my thought
To follow the fulfilment and the deed?
I counted not on this. I counted ever
To hold and turn it over in my hands
Much longer."

Yet he cannot now escape the law which his own speculations have imposed on him. It is in vain that the thirst for action leaves him for a moment, and he cries:—

"What need for action yet? I am happy now;
I feel no lack. What cause is there for haste?
Am I not happy? Is not that enough?"

bidding the Spirit depart. The Spirit will not go, but turns upon him with a new menace:—

"What! you know not that I too can be serious,
Can speak big words, and use the tone imperious,
Can speak, not honiedly, of love and beauty,
But sternly of a something much like Duty."

The casuistry of action becomes very serious when the voice of the world imposes upon the

soul one of its own laws, and goads it on by an appeal to its own higher impulses. Dipsychus is daunted and shaken:—

"It must be, then. I feel it in my soul;
The iron enters, sundering flesh and bone,
And sharper than the two-edged sword of God.
I come into deep waters. Help, oh help!
The floods run over me.
Therefore, farewell!—a long and last farewell,
Ye pious sweet simplicities of life,
Good books, good friends, and holy moods, and all
That lent rough life sweet Sunday-seeming rests,
Making earth heaven-like. Welcome, wicked world!
The hardening heart, the calculating brain,
Narrowing its doors to thought, the lying lips,
The calm-dissembling eyes, the greedy flesh,
The world, the devil,—welcome, welcome, welcome!"

In the midst of this mental anguish and moral conflict, the Spirit of the world sneers at him. What are you dreading to give up? What is the work you have set yourself? Is it literature—novels, reviews, poems, perhaps a little philosophising — vague scepticism, dilettante dreamings about life? Or else you'll try teaching and tutoring of youth, not so as to absorb your whole time, but always keeping leisure for your meditations and illuminations:

"Heartily you will not take to anything;
Whatever happen, don't I see you still
Living no life at all? Even as now
An o'ergrown baby, sucking at the dugs
Of instinct, dry long since. Come, come! you are old
encugh
For spoon-meat, surely.
Will you go on thus
Until death end you? If indeed it does:
For what it does, none knows. Yet as for you,
You'll hardly have the courage to die outright;
You'll somehow halve even it. Methinks I see you,
Through everlasting limboes of void time,
Twirling and twiddling ineffectively,
And indeterminately swaying for ever."

In this way, with continual sarcasms and much home truth, seasoned with a reiteration of the philosophy of submission, the Spirit drives Dipsychus on to engage in the world's work. Having bowed and given up the contest, Dipsychus still abjures his counsellor:—

"Not for thy service, thou imperious fiend,
Not to do thy work or the like of thine;
Not to please thee, O base and fallen spirit!
But one Most High, Most True, whom, without Thee,
It seems I cannot."

He still sets the law of life and the law of the Gospel at variance:

"Do we owe fathers nothing—mothers nought?
Is filial duty folly? Yet He says,
'He that loves father, mother, more than Me;'
Yea, and 'the man his parents shall desert,'
The ordinance says, 'and cleave unto his wife.'
O man, behold thy wife!' the hard, naked world;
Adam, accept thy Eve!"

With many protestations, and reservations, and antinomian arguments, Dipsychus at length accepts the yoke of the prince of this world, not without having his eyes open to what he is about, but seeing no other course. And the Spirit says:—

"O, goodness! won't you find it pleasant
To own the positive and present;
To see yourself like people round,
And feel your feet upon the ground!"

After this long analysis of Dipsychus, we have only to call attention to the skill with which Clough has sustained his two characters. In the course of their protracted dialogue, they never change, except in so far as an alteration of will and purpose is wrought in the weaker spirit by the stronger and more persistent tempter. The force of unscrupulous and narrow power, firmly planted upon the solid

facts of common life, is displayed with wonderful vigor by the poet, in his Mephistopheles, who, at the same time, has never failed to make the most of the humours and satirical side of his character. There is nothing tragic in this Mephistopheles, just as there is nothing tragic (melodramatically speaking) in the final concession of Dipsychus. But beneath the ironical sneers of the one, and the helpless struggles of the other, lurks the deep and subtle tragedy of human life and action—of free souls caged, and lofty aspirations curbed—a vulgar and diurnal tragedy over which no tears are shed in theatres, but which, we might imagine, stirs the sorrow of the angels day by day as they look down upon our world.

This same most piteous chord is touched even more deeply and with a keener sense of hopelessness in the poem called "The Questioning Spirit"—one of the most perfect among Clough's earlier compositions, written, perhaps, at the darkest and most troubled period of his life, on the theme of what may be described as the Criterion of Duty. As an-

other appendix or gloss upon the philosophy of Dipsychus, we may mention the lines beginning, "Duty—that's to say complying," the concentrated verjuice of the satire of which is very characteristic of one of Clough's moods. An answer or antidote to these more gloomy views of common life is found in the elegiac lines beginning, "Hope evermore and believe, O man!" which contain this cheerful stoicism:

"Not for the gain of the gold; for the getting, the hoarding, the having;
But for the joy of the deed; but for the Duty to do."

It remains to consider Clough's artistic qualities more in detail than we have hitherto done. But neither is it easy to do this, nor have we left ourselves much space for doing it in. In the course of our notice, however, we have been at pains to select passages for quotation which might illustrate his style, as well as supply the matter necessary for explaining his subject. There is a certain dryness, hardness, and severity—a want of colour, tone, and richness—in most of what Clough has written. In daily life he was a man of few words, and diffi-

cult utterance; nor does he seem ever to have gained real facility of poetical expression. His last poems, the "Mari Magno Tales," have indeed more fluency; but here the *copia verborum* tends to a somewhat prosaic prolixity, instead of adding warmth and splendour to his style. Those readers who have accustomed their ears to the sublime harmonies of Milton, or to the exquisite lyrical music of Shelley, or to the more artificially melodious rhythms of Mr. Swinburne, or to Tennyson's elegant and complex cadences, will complain that Clough is harsh and unadorned. He rough-hews indeed (as it has been said) like a Cyclops; but he cannot finish like a Canova. Occasionally he attains to perfect style and form *per saltum*, by a sudden flash of native energy and fire. He pours forth torrid thought and feeling like a lava yet into the adamantine mould of stately and severe expression. "Easter Day" is a specimen of this success. The poem owes nothing to its rhythm, or its rhymes, or the beauty of its imagery, or the music of its language. It is plain and natural, and without allurements

of any sort. But the emotion is so intense, and so thoroughly expressed—the thought is so vigorous and vital in every line—that the grandest poetry is wrought out of the commonest materials, apparently without effort, and by the mere intensity of the poet's will. "Easter Day" is a bronze poem. It is the most perfect illustration in English literature of the artistic canons which Wordsworth preached, and upon which his own practice brought contempt. "Qui laborat orat" and many more of the minor religious poems are likewise cast of red-hot feeling, in a stern and simple mould.

But, such being the style by which alone Clough attains to excellence, it follows that when he is not perfectly simple and clear he has no excuse: when he is prolix he becomes prosy. There is no gorgeousness of language, pomp of sound, or playfulness of fancy to cover the faults of ill-constructed or feebly-designed poems, and to yield ample matter for quotation when the subject fails to interest.

Passing to matters of mere detail, we may observe that Clough apparently rhymed with

some difficulty, and that he was too fond of a jingling refrain carried through a poem of many stanzas, as in the lyrics of "Dipsychus." It was only when he felt with intensity, and when the expression of his feeling welled up spontaneously within his heart and overflowed, that his poems were perfect; and then we imagine that few writers had the power of more exactly and touchingly saying what they wished.

Connected, apparently, with this inadequacy of utterance in any of the more complex and rhymed forms of verse, was his predilection for hexameters. The English hexameter has always been confessed to be a somewhat rough and jolting metre, when compared with heroic or blank verse or the Spenserian stanza. Yet it served Clough's purpose. In those loose, yet rhythmical lines he was able to express with the exact fidelity required by his artistic conscience all essential realities of fact, all delicate shades of feeling—to turn from sentiment to satire, from the incidents of travel to æsthetical or religious meditations, from

landscape pictures to philosophy or argument or analysis. A good judge of poetry has lately pronounced it as his opinion that Clough never intended his hexameters for metre, but for cadenced prose. But it is impossible that Clough could have meant these hexameters for an essay in prose, since they are utterly unlike any sort or kind of prose writing, and are extremely suggestive, to say the least, of Horace's epistles and of Goethe. No artist of taste would make experiments in one species of writing by importing into it the peculiar rhythm of another species. If a man chooses to cast his thought into the world-old form of the hexameter, he is not asking us to compare him with the "Religio Medici," the "Areopagitica," the "Opium Eater," and "Modern Painters," but with the "Iliad," the "De Rerum Naturâ," "Hermann and Dorothea," and "Evangeline." Judged by these latter standards, Mr. Clough takes a high place for the subtlety, variety, and racy flavour of originality which he has imparted to this ancient vehicle of thought. His hexameters are *sui generis*, unlike those of

any other writer in any language, and better, we venture to assert, in spite of Mr. Arnold, than those of any other English author. If he sets prosody at defiance, and makes such dactyls as "pace slowly," he yet produces periods of majestic and sonorous music like those which might be quoted from the earlier parts of "Amours de Voyage." But, leaving these questions of style and form, we may pass to other poetical qualities of Mr. Clough. In his painting from nature, and in his descriptions of character, we trace the marvellous sincerity and accuracy of his mind. The "Bothie" is full of the most delightful pictures of highland scenery, the fidelity of which can only be tested by a minute comparison of Clough's words with the actual places they refer to. "Amours de Voyage," in the same way, yields many most highly finished and exquisitely faithful pictures of Rome. Everything Clough wrote he drew from personal experience as far as the locality and *mise en scène* are concerned. And this accounts for the strict truthfulness to nature which we find in his chief poems.

As for his power of analysing and sustaining character, for his irony and humour, and pathos, we have already said and quoted enough to show that he possesses these higher faculties of genius in no small degree. What is particularly important in the present age of literature, he is powerful without being ostentatious, passionate and intense without extravagance, profound without obscurity, perfectly simple in form and solid in matter. He is a poet who will bear being frequently read; and who, each time we read him, astonishes us with some fresh beauty, or some new reach of thought.

FROM THE LIST
OF
NICHOLAS L. BROWN